

# SOUTHERN LIVESTOCK STANDARD

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## 2022 in review

By James Mitchell, University of Arkansas Livestock Marketing Specialist

This year was challenging for the livestock and poultry industries. High input prices, including agricultural chemicals, farm labor, feed, and fuel, raised the cost of production. Severe drought led to accelerated herd liquidation and poor hay production for cattle producers. Logistical and transportation issues continue to pressure agricultural supply chains. Highly pathogenic avian flu has

negatively impacted poultry and egg production. Despite these challenges, U.S. red meat and poultry production is projected to reach a record 107.5 billion pounds in 2022 according to the most recent World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report.

The Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) estimates 2022 cash costs for cow-calf producers at \$963/cow or 13% higher year over year. The largest expenditure for cattle producers is harvested forage

and feed. LMIC's 2022/2023 season-average hay price is \$160/ton, an increase of 9% compared to the 2021/2022 season-average price. Poor growing conditions this summer and expensive inputs contribute to these record-high hay prices. LMIC's 2022/2023 average corn price is \$7.00/bu, an increase of \$1/bu compared to their 2021/2022 corn price. Feed costs tend to follow the corn market, and we will not see cheaper corn until at least the 2023/2024 marketing year. Major cattle produc-

tion regions have dealt with widespread drought since mid-2020. The Southeast has mostly avoided significant drought impacts. However, conditions this summer deteriorated rapidly throughout Texas and Southwest U.S. For example, in late June, only 15% of Arkansas pastures were rated as poor or very poor. By late July, USDA estimated that 75% of Arkansas pasture and range was poor or very poor. The rapid decline and pasture conditions brought large numbers of cows to mar-

ket in the Southern Plains and Southeast. Federally inspected beef cow slaughter will finish 12% higher year over year. Through 48 weeks, national beef cow slaughter totals 3.58 million head, and is the highest since 1996. Regionally, beef cow slaughter in Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) totals 1.02 million head and represents 28% of the national total. These large slaughter totals will significantly affect cattle inventory numbers that USDA will release in

January. We will see further tightening of cattle supplies and increasing prices in 2023.

Cattle markets improved in 2022, with prices at their highest since 2014-2015. In the Southern Plains (SP), fed steer prices averaged \$141/cwt, an increase of \$20/cwt compared to last year. SP prices for 500-600 pound steers averaged \$191/cwt or 13% higher year over year. Despite large volumes of cull cows at markets, SP prices for 85-90% lean slaughter cows averaged \$63/cwt, an increase of 17%.

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PERIODICAL

### 2023 farm bill discussions relate to money AgriLife Extension policy expert updates on potential changes

By Kay Ledbetter, Texas AgriLife Today

Changes in the new farm bill will mostly be about money.

That was the message Joe Outlaw, Ph.D., Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University co-director in the Department of Agricultural Economics of the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Bryan-College Station, delivered recently during the annual Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

Outlaw, speaking about the farm bill, said a lot of action is happening in Washington with different proposals and discussions on the table. However, in the end, it will boil down to what money is available.

The Inflation Reduction Act signed into law by President Biden earlier this year extended the Affordable Care Act, as well as added funding to existing agricultural conservation programs familiar to producers.

The biggest component of the farm bill, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, is expected to increase the cost from \$663.8 billion to \$1.1 trillion and account for over 80% of the funding.

SNAP, however, has nothing to do with the agriculture portion of the farm bill, Outlaw said.

Proponents of minimizing government spending need to know that "if you cut all of the agriculture spending, you wouldn't make much of an impact on overall government spending," he said. "But without more money dedicated to agriculture, we can't make programs better for the farmers."

#### On the discussion table

Outlaw said several issues are being discussed that could affect the overall cost of the farm bill and impact producers.

— Higher Reference Prices – The commodity reference prices used to calculate government payments have not changed since they were initiated in 2014. Payments to growers are triggered when the average market price for a crop year falls

below the commodity reference price.

"Our costs are up, so there's a need for these reference prices to be moved to be relevant, but that update will cost money."

These statutory reference prices are set by Congress, and the 2018 Farm Bill allows reference prices to increase if prices rise – which they have, Outlaw said. The Agricultural and Food Policy Center is helping evaluate the reference prices and the costs those changes would make on the farm bill.

"In this current bill, corn reference prices will go up as well as soybeans, but a

number of commodities like wheat, while prices rose, they didn't move high enough to increase reference prices," Outlaw said.

— Base Update – All farm program payments are made according to a farm's base acreage, which is meant to reflect the long-term average planted acres of each commodity on the farm. The old base acreage was set in 2002

(Continued on page 6)



The Livestock Marketing Information Center estimates 2022 cash costs for cow-calf producers at \$963/cow or 13% higher year over year.

Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas  
ROUND-UP REVIEW

• See Pages 12-14 •

# Just Your Standard Bull

By Michael Sturgess

# TEXAS Trails...

By Clay Coppedge

HELLO 2023!! Pardon my yelling, but there are numerous indicators that this year promises to be a better year. I mean, what was not to like? We had drought, double digit inflation, rising costs on just about everything... In addition, to these, I started off last year by fracturing my ankle on New Year's Day.

So, what lies on the horizon for 2023? For starters, the hope of better calf prices. We heard it often

last fall. But what have we seen? On Monday (Jan. 2nd), 148 steers weighing 633 lbs. brought \$187.11, or \$1184.40/head at Oklahoma City. Steers under 800 lbs. were reported \$4 higher than last week. In 2014, the price for 500-600 steers reached up to \$260. Will we get there? Prices rose 41% in 2014 to get us there. That kind of increase would put us in rarified air. A 34-38% increase would put us pretty

close to the 2014 highs.

So, what about the drought? Forecasts from back in late November-early December had us staying in this drought until as late as June. However, most areas around the state have already seen more rain in November/December than what was predicted. Perhaps these are signs that the current La Niña episode is subsiding. And with the exception of one cold snap, most areas have experienced warmer than normal temperatures which has triggered growth in our cool season grasses. And the 10-day forecast for my San Antonio area just north of town has the coldest morning pegged at 43 degrees through the 12th of January. Mid-January is usually the time of year when we get a cold snap.

Currently, it is difficult to get a handle on inflation. The current administration crows about fuel prices dropping from their highs last summer. Yet they forget that in November of 2021 the national gasoline average was \$1.75. When compared to that current average of \$3.23 as of Jan. 3rd—we still have a ways to go here. And who is to say of we have seen the bottom of the stock market? Until we get a handle on inflation, it will be difficult to predict.

Yet still the overall picture has certainly improved from a year ago. So here is to your good health and good fortune for the coming year. May the new year be your best yet for you and yours. Happy New Year!

### Popeye the Texan

We like to think everybody has heard of Popeye, the legendary character of comic strips, cartoons and movies who is sometimes referred to formally as Popeye the Sailor Man, but not everybody knows that Popeye was a Texan.

Popeye first appeared in a comic strip called "Thimble Theater" which was drawn and written by Elzie Crisler Segar, a staff cartoonist for the New York Evening Journal. Popeye just sort of showed up one day in "Thimble Theater" and never left. In time and with the aid of innumerable cans of spinach, Popeye ran the whole strip. He would go on to be a star of television cartoons and movies and an effective spokesman for the spinach industry; his popularity coincided with a dramatic percent increase in spinach demand. Much of that spinach was grown in Texas.

We can credit Popeye with saving the spinach industry in Texas, as well he should because he was so dependent on it for his physical strength and emotional and mental well-being. Every time the situation looked hopeless for Popeye he popped a can of spinach and – bam! – he got stronger and things got better. Doctors today believe that Popeye had a "hyperactive spinach gene."

Born in Victoria as a full-grown sailor man, Popeye was not a typical Texan. He dressed in sailor's clothes and never wore cowboy boots or packed a six-shooter, though his pipe was sometimes em-

ployed as a weapon, power tool, and sometimes as a spin-ach-delivery system. It was very handy, that pipe, which is probably why he never bothered to actually smoke it. He was born, incidentally, near the heart of spinach country.

In 1929, "Thimble Theater" mainstays Ham Gravy and his brother-in-law Castor Oyl went looking for a sailor man to aid them in their search for the legendary Whiffle Hen. Castor Oyl approached a man with a pipe,

sailor's uniform, and some of the freakiest forearms of all time and asked, "Are you a sailor?"

"Ja think I'm a cowboy?" Popeye replied.

Soon Ham Gravy and Castor Oyl all but disappeared from the strip. Olive Oyl stayed around as a love interest. Popeye clearly loved Olive Oyl but she never really committed to him. More than one manly man more than once stole her heart, but she always ran back to Popeye after he beat up her evil suit-

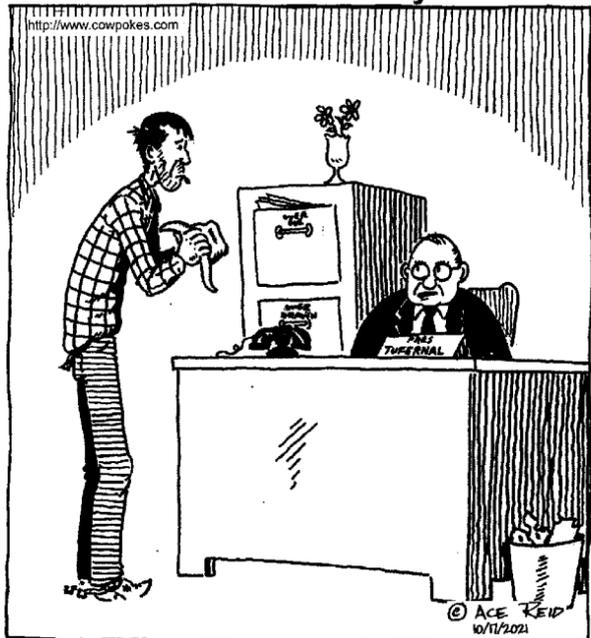
(Continued on page 7)



### USDA Livestock Export/Import Statistics For 12-29-22

SPECIES:	12-24-22:	Wk.-Dt.:	Yr.-Dt.:
1) BEEF CATTLE			
a. Slaughter	1,064	987	77,108
b. Breeding Males	35	34	2,895
c. Breeding Females	22	65	1,622
Total	1,121	1,086	81,625
2) HOGS			
a. Slaughter	0	0	0
b. Breeding Males	33	0	1,756
c. Breeding Females	40	2,682	18,338
Total	73	2,682	20,094
3) SHEEP			
a. Slaughter			
1) lambs	0	0	0
2) ewes	0	0	0
b. Breeding Males	0	0	0
c. Breeding Females	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
4) DAIRY CATTLE			
a. Breeding Males	0	0	2
b. Breeding Females	119	123	5,880
Total	119	123	5,882
5) GOATS			
a. Angora	0	0	0
b. Spanish	0	0	0
c. Other	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
6) HORSES			
a. Slaughter	268	354	16,155
b. Breeding Males	36	34	1,488
c. Breeding Females	43	81	2,274
d. Geldings	13	22	850
e. Burro/Mule/Pony	0	0	16
Total	360	491	20,783
7) EXOTICS			
Total	85	0	262
<b>MEXICO TO NEW MEXICO IMPORTS</b>			
SPECIES:	12-31-22:	1-1-22 - Present	
FEEDER CATTLE	5,914	490,871	
<b>MEXICO TO TEXAS IMPORTS</b>			
FEEDER CATTLE	0	179,821	

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## New water rule will create more confusion for farmers

Compiled by Martha A. Hollida

The Clean Water Act has been a major concern for farmers and ranchers since its beginning, as it has major implications for their operations. The attempts by federal administrations to define waters of the United States have led to legal wranglings over exactly what is meant by a navigable water as laid out in the Clean Water Act. It has created confusion about such things as does the water have to be one that can be navigated or water directly connected to it? Or do Prairie Potholes or seasonal wetlands that may have more tenuous connections to main waterways count, too?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Friday, Dec. 30, announced a new waters of the United States — or “WOTUS” — rule. Numerous farm groups and those in other, related industries, announced disappointment over the new rule, arguing that the agencies should have waited for an upcoming U.S. Supreme Court opinion on the issue in Sackett v. EPA.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall commented today on EPA's issuance of yet another WOTUS, which will replace the Navigable Waters Protection Rule.

“AFBF is extremely disappointed in the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' new Waters of the United States Rule. Farmers and ranchers share the goal of protecting the nation's waterways, but they deserve rules that don't require a team of attorneys and consultants to identify ‘navigable waters’ on their land. EPA has doubled down on the old significant nexus test, creating more complicated regulations that will impose a quagmire of regulatory uncertainty on large areas of private farmland miles from the nearest navigable water.

“Even more puzzling is the administration's insistence on moving forward with a new rule while the Supreme Court is about to issue a decision on the scope of the Clean Water Act. A ruling in the Sackett case could send WOTUS back to the drawing board, so it makes no sense for EPA to issue a rule that will only cause more disruption and uncertainty.

“We appreciate the agencies' attempt to provide needed clarifications of the

prior converted cropland exclusion and exemptions for irrigation ditches and stock ponds, but the overall rule is still unworkable for America's farm families. The back and forth over water regulations threatens the progress made to responsibly manage natural resources and will make it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to ensure food security for families at home and abroad.”

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association responded also.

“For too long, farmers and ranchers have dealt with the whiplash of shifting WOTUS definitions. Today, the Biden administration sought to finalize a WOTUS definition that will protect both our nation's water supply and cattle producers across the nation.” said NCBA Chief Counsel

(Continued on page 5)

## Special

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#### Tuesday, February 14

8:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - Viewing of Sale Cattle  
12:30 P.M. - All Breeds Bull Show  
2:30 P.M. - Commercial Female Show  
Sponsored by Capital Farm Credit

#### Wednesday, February 15

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10:00 A.M. - All Breeds Bull Sale  
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Oklahoma National Stockyards, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma:

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SALE: Beeville Livestock Commission, Inc. Beeville, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Brazos Valley Livestock Commission Bryan, Texas. DATE OF SALE: 1-3-23. VOLUME: 629. TREND: Steady/higher. STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 190-240 162-197.50 300-400 lbs. 195-250 170-210 400-500 lbs. 185-255 158-207 500-600 lbs. 170-202 150-179 600-700 lbs. 155-195 142-167 700-800 lbs. 158-164 134-142 Slaughter cows 55-80 Slaughter bulls 80-105 Stocker cows 850-1250 Pairs 1050-1450

SALE: Live Oak Auction, Inc. Three Rivers, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Nixon Livestock Commission, Inc. Nixon, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Gulf Coast Livestock Auction, LLC Alice, Texas. DATE OF SALE: 1-3-23. VOLUME: 589. TREND: Steady/higher. STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 170-210 155-178 300-400 lbs. 160-220 150-187 400-500 lbs. 162-210 159-197 500-600 lbs. 158-197 150-188 600-700 lbs. 150-170 132-150 700-800 lbs. 130-145 125-131 Slaughter cows 25-85 Slaughter bulls 65-105 Stocker cows 750-1000 Pairs 850-1150

SALE: Gillespie Livestock Company Fredericksburg, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Groesbeck Auction/Livestock Co., LLC Groesbeck, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Jordan Cattle Auction San Saba & Mason, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Giddings Livestock Commission Giddings, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Lampasas Cattle Auction Lampasas, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: East Texas Livestock, Inc. Crockett, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Caldwell Livestock Commission Co., Inc. Caldwell, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Buffalo Livestock Commission Co., Inc. Buffalo, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Navasota Livestock Auction Co. Navasota, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Cattleman's Brenham Livestock Brenham, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Cuero-Victoria Livestock Markets Cuero & Victoria, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Gonzales Livestock Market, Inc. Gonzales, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Columbus Livestock Co. Columbus, Texas. NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY. VOLUME: TREND: STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 300-400 lbs. 400-500 lbs. 500-600 lbs. 600-700 lbs. 700-800 lbs. Slaughter cows Slaughter bulls Stocker cows Pairs

SALE: Four County Livestock Auction Industry, Texas. DATE OF SALE: 1-3-23. VOLUME: 542. TREND: Steady/higher. STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 140-260 120-205 300-400 lbs. 135-260 120-217.50 400-500 lbs. 130-225 120-197.50 500-600 lbs. 130-207.50 120-195 600-700 lbs. 130-185 110-177.50 700-800 lbs. — — Slaughter cows 35-86.50 Slaughter bulls 80-112.50 Stocker cows 350-1050 Pairs 650-1250

SALE: El Campo Livestock Auction El Campo, Texas. DATE OF SALE: 1-3-23. VOLUME: 1032. TREND: Steady/higher. STEERS HEIFERS. 200-300 lbs. 165-243 142-213 300-400 lbs. 182-248 153-218 400-500 lbs. 181-230 166-203 500-600 lbs. 169-206 157-198 600-700 lbs. 152-190 143-180 700-800 lbs. 80-161 35-160 Slaughter cows 22-82 Slaughter bulls 82-116 Stocker cows 750-1100 Pairs —

Sheep & Goat Auctions:

Producers Livestock Auction, San Angelo, Texas, January 3, 2023: Sheep and goats: Total receipts 3,031, last reported (12-19-22) 6,078, last year 0. Feeder sheep/lambs 60 (2.0%), last reported (12-19-22) 66 (1.1%), last year 0 (0.0%). Slaughter sheep/lambs 1,393 (46.0%), last reported (12-19-22) 2,614 (43.0%), last year 0 (0.0%). Replacement sheep/lambs 65 (2.1%), last reported (12-19-22) 200 (3.3%), last year 0 (0.0%). Feeder goats 121 (4.0%), last reported (12-19-22) 354 (5.8%), last year 0 (0.0%). Slaughter goats 1,310 (39.9%), last reported (12-19-22) 2,694 (44.3%), last year 0 (0.0%). Replacement goats 182 (6.0%), last reported (12-19-22) 150 (2.5%), last year 0 (0.0%). No recent comparison due to the holidays. All classes of sheep and goats had a firm undertone. Trading was fairly active, demand good. Supply included: 2% Feeder Sheep/Lambs (13% Lambs, 87% Hair Lambs); 46% Slaughter Sheep/Lambs (16% Woolled & Shorn, 65% Hair Breeds, 4% Ewes, 10% Hair Ewes, 0% Bucks, 5% Hair Bucks); 2% Replacement Sheep/Lambs (100% Hair Ewes); 4% Feeder Goats (100% Kids); 40% Slaughter Goats (84% Kids, 10% Nannies/Does, 7% Bucks/Billies, 0% Wethers); 6% Replacement Goats (100% Nannies/Does).

Gillespie Livestock Company, Fredericksburg, Texas:

● NO SALE DUE TO HOLIDAY ●

For additional market reports go to: www.southernlivestock.com

# Vitamin A: A major player in stillborn and weak calf syndromes

By Gregg Hanzlicek, DVM, Kansas Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

Vitamin A deficiency can present with many different clinical signs, but the most common signs are weak or stillborn calves. In this article, we will discuss some possible reasons why this may occur in our spring-calving beef herds.

**Deficiency timing:**

Fresh, green forages contain very high levels of Vitamin A (as carotenes). It is rare for Vitamin A deficiency to occur during a normal pasture season. We do occasionally observe deficiencies in the pasture season during drought conditions. As the grasses become dormant (have turned from green to brown color), the Vitamin A content will decrease and the pasture may not provide the appropriate amount of required dietary vitamin.

Vitamin A deficiency is primarily a winter issue. Cows on green-grass pastures will store Vitamin A in their livers. During late fall and winter, when Vitamin A intake is not sufficient, they

can use this storage supply to meet metabolic demands. Unfortunately, the storage supply only lasts between 2 and 4 months.

Harvested forages that are still green in color will also contain some Vitamin A, but at very low levels. This vitamin is the least stable of all vitamins and its stability is negatively affected by elevated temperatures, light, presence of oxygen, and humidity. Therefore, during the harvesting, curing, and stor-

ing process a large amount of Vitamin A is lost as shown in the table below.

*The estimated Vitamin A equivalent in different forages; through harvest*

Feed source	Vitamin A equivalent (IU/lb dry matter)
Green grass pasture	18,000
Orchard grass hay	1,400
Alfalfa hay	1,300
Maynard, 1979	

**Supplementation:** A deficiency in supplemented herds. What might explain this? Most herds will supplement Vitamin A through a

trace-mineral/vitamin pack supplement. Unfortunately, we do commonly see Vitamin A deficiency in these herds. Some mineral packs do not contain the appropriate amount of Vitamin A. Normal free-choice mineral/vitamin supplement consumption is 2-4 ounces per head per day. To meet the needs of a 1,400-cow consuming 2 ounces of mineral, 300,000 IU of Vitamin A per pound of supplement would be required. If consuming 3 ounces of mineral, this concentration would need be 200,000 IU/lb. A large percentage of these supplements contain less than

150,000 IU/lb. Another consideration is supplement intake amounts variation between cows. Some research suggests up to 14% of cows do not consume any dry mineral supplement at all, and the variability between animals that do is very large. Lastly, it doesn't matter what level of Vitamin A is contained in the supplement if it isn't consistently available for consumption. Cows can't eat what is not available!

(Continued on page 8)

*New water...*

(Continued from page 3)

Mary-Thomas Hart. "While the rule retains longstanding, bipartisan WOTUS exclusions for certain agricultural features, it creates new uncertainty for farmers, ranchers, and landowners across the nation."

Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) President Arthur Uhl released a statement in response to the Biden Administration's final WOTUS rule.

"For years we have been at the mercy of unclear and ever-changing federal regulations of surface water on our private property. Rather than creating a clear definition of WOTUS that defines what bodies of water fall under federal jurisdiction, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) only further exacerbated the problem. While the new rule creates limited exceptions for agriculture, the changes still fall woefully short of addressing the concerns raised by landowners to the EPA. The WOTUS has damaging effects to the beef industry, delaying, obstructing, and hindering our ability to raise beef, steward our land, and support our local economies. Landowners must now implement the unclear framework of this rule, or risk being fined thousands of dollars per day for noncompliance."

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**Final rule for the AMS Cattle  
Contracts Library**

**By Brenda Boetel, University of Wisconsin-River Falls Agricultural Economics professor**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published the final rule needed to create a Cattle Contracts Library. The final rule requires packers that slaughtered an average of not less than five percent of the number of fed cattle slaughtered nationally during the immediately preceding five calendar years to submit contractual information for the purchase of cattle.

The Cattle Contracts Library Pilot Program (library)

is intended to increase market transparency for cattle producers. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) held listening sessions and conducted a pilot program, which was then used to develop a working library model. Once the final rule goes into effect on Jan. 6, 2023 the AMS will collect, maintain, and report aggregated information on contracts between packers and cattle producers for the purchase of fed cattle. The li-

brary will include different types of contracts and contract terms. Information will include schedules or premiums and discounts, delivery and transportation terms and payments, number of head purchased under contracts, appendices and agreements of financing, risk-sharing or profit sharing or other supplement information on cattle requirements. It is expected that the working Pilot will not be available to the public until early 2023.

The Pilot is modeled on the Swine Contract Library, which features a summary report of the public on contract terms available to producers and a monthly report. AMS believes the Cattle Contracts Library Pilot Program will support competition by providing producers with the market information they need to make informed production, marketing, and business decisions.

Information on the Cattle Contract Library is available at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/livestock-poultry-grain/cattle-contracts-library>.

**Japan gives final approval for beef trade provisions**

**Source: Texas Cattle Feeders Association**

Japan's parliament gave final approval to a deal amending a beef safeguard mechanism under the U.S.-Japan trade agreement, which was signed by U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai last week.

The change will reduce the probability that U.S. beef could be hit with higher Japanese tariffs, according to USTR. Japan was the second largest U.S. beef market in

2021, totaling \$2.4 billion. The updated safeguard "will ensure our farmers and ranchers continue to have access to one of the world's most dynamic markets," said

Tai. "The protocol represents a foundational pillar of our bilateral trade relationship, and I am grateful to our producers and stakeholders who helped make it possible."



Photo by Katelyn Steffens

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**2023 farm bill...**

(Continued from page 1)

and updated in 2014 for most crops, while seed cotton was updated in 2018. Some producers are growing different crops now but haven't been allowed to update their base acreage to move it from one crop to another, and they would like the opportunity to bring it current.

But a forced base update is different, Outlaw said. This could potentially hurt Texas if it happens, because Texas producers have more base acres than they are currently planting, which means they could lose base acres in a forced base update.

He pointed out, for example, that Dallam, Hartley, Moore, Castro and Parmer counties in the Texas High Plains each have more than 100,000 corn base acres, but they are not planting all of that to corn anymore.

"Expect a fight," Outlaw said. "We could lose about 3.6 million base acres in Texas."

— Margin Coverage — Similar to the dairy industry's program protecting profit margins, there are proposals to evaluate implementing a margin coverage for crop producers. This means crop producers would receive a safety net payment from the government when the difference between the national price of their commodity and an estimate of costs is lower than an announced threshold.

— Permanent Disaster Program — The Emergency Relief Program, created to assist crop producers suffering disaster-related losses, addresses a need. However, the continued use of ad hoc disaster programs raises important issues, particularly related to crop insurance interactions.

"It's very difficult to deal

with the disaster program and not affect the crop insurance program," Outlaw said.

**Picking a plan for 2023**

As those discussions take place on the next farm bill, Outlaw said producers must go ahead and decide what programs they will utilize this coming year.

When choosing between Agricultural Risk Coverage, ARC, and Price Loss Coverage, PLC, Outlaw said things are different going into 2023.

"For the first time in a long time, I'd go ahead and say go ARC for most commodities," he said.

Prices are still well above reference prices, so PLC is not likely to provide much support. Because ARC protects against revenue losses, a producer might suffer a major yield loss that could trigger an ARC payment even with high prices.

## Reproductive failure in cattle-frequently asked questions about Leptospirosis

By Dr. Michelle Arnold, University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

“Reproductive failure” is an all-encompassing term if a cow loses a calf during pregnancy or if she fails to get pregnant. Causes of reproductive failure are often divided into infectious and non-infectious categories. Examples of “non-infectious” include poor cow nutrition (lack of energy and micronutrients such as selenium/Vitamin E); bull infertility, disease, and injury; breeding season management (shortened breeding season, insufficient bull-to-cow ratios); genetic and some congenital abnormalities that result in fetal death; and toxic agents such as nitrates, phytoestrogens, and drugs including steroids and pro-

taglandins. “Infectious” causes are bacteria, viruses, protozoal and fungal agents that directly or indirectly damage the placenta and/or the fetus. Examples include the BVD virus, IBR virus, the protozoan *Neospora caninum* and many species of the bacterium *Leptospira*, among many others. This series of articles will explore the most common infectious causes

of abortion and reproductive failure in cattle and available options for control and prevention.

What is Leptospirosis or “Lepto”? Leptospirosis is a complicated bacterial disease commonly associated with abortions, stillbirths, premature births, and infertility in cattle. However, this bacterium also causes sickness and death in cattle, dogs, sheep,

and horses worldwide and is an important zoonotic disease affecting an estimated one million humans annually. Farmers, veterinarians, and those working in meat processing facilities are at highest risk to contract the disease.

What causes leptospirosis? The disease is caused by a unique, highly coiled, Gram-negative bacterium known as a “spirochete” belonging to the genus *Leptospira*. These “leptospires” are highly motile due to their spiral shape and, once inside a host animal, they enter the bloodstream and

replicate in many different organs including the liver, kidney, spleen, reproductive tract, eyes and central nervous system. The immune system will produce antibodies that usually clear the organism from the blood and tissues rather quickly except from the kidney. Leptospires take up residence primarily in the kidney and are excreted in the urine for months to even years after infection, depending on the species of *Leptospira* and the animal infected. Less frequently, leptospires persist in the male and female genital tract and mammary gland of females and

may be excreted in semen, uterine discharges, and milk.

How do cattle become infected with leptospires? Transmission of the organism is most often through direct contact with infected urine, placental fluids, semen, or milk. However, transmission may also occur by coming in contact with areas contaminated with infected urine, such as stagnant ponds or swampy areas with standing water. The leptospires survive in the environment for long periods of time (approximately six months in the right conditions) in stagnant

(Continued on page 8)

### Texas Trails...

(Continued from page 2)

ors. Every time. We have wondered more than once why he bothered.

Where Popeye came from was a mystery until 1934 when the Victoria Advocate published a special edition celebrating its 88th year. Segar contributed a special strip for the occasion, in which Popeye said: “Please assept me hearties bes’ wishes and felicitations on account of your 88th anniversary...Victoria is me ol’ hometown of account of tha’s where I got borned at.” The Advocate was the first paper in the country to run “Thimble Theater.”

Popeye’s legacy in Texas is considerable, especially in relation to the state’s spinach growers. The first documented shipment of spinach out of Texas was in 1918, and large-scale planting commenced soon after. The industry received a tremendous shot in the arm when Popeye showed up in Segar’s comic strip and on TV using used canned spinach to attain truly superhero powers. Generations of kids were told to eat their spinach so they might grow to be strong like Popeye. Spinach demand increased dramatically.

Crystal City in South Texas became known as the spinach capital of the world and staged the first annual spinach festival in 1936. A year later the city erected a Popeye statue across from city hall. Asked to comment, Popeye said simply, “I yam what I yam.”

And what he yam is Texan.

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Table 1: Common *Leptospira* Isolates in Ruminants

Species	Serovar	Maintenance Host	Incidental Hosts
<i>L. borgpetersenii</i>	Hardjo (type hardjo-bovis)	Cattle (repro failure)	Sheep, goats
<i>L. kirschneri</i>	Grippotyphosa	Raccoons, muskrats, squirrels	Cattle, sheep, horses, dogs
<i>L. interrogans</i>	Pomona	Swine, opossums, skunks, raccoons	Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, dogs
<i>L. interrogans</i>	Canicola	Dogs	Cattle
<i>L. interrogans</i>	Icterohaemorrhagiae	Rats	Dogs, cattle, swine
<i>L. interrogans</i>	Bratislava	Pigs, mice, horses	Dogs, cattle, horses
<i>L. interrogans</i>	Hardjo (type hardjoprajtino)	Cattle-Europe only (milk drop)	Sheep, goats

**Reproductive...**

(Continued from page 7)

water as well as in warm and moist soils but die quickly when dry or in cold temperatures. Entry into the animal may be through penetration of intact mucous membranes such as through the mouth and the conjunctiva of the eye, or through damaged or water-softened skin. The organism may also be transferred during breeding and also during pregnancy from dam to fetus.

Which animals carry ("host") this organism and are responsible for spread of disease? This is where the complicated life cycle of this organism must be explained to understand the wide range of disease symptoms that may be observed in cattle. To begin, it is important to distinguish two different types of "hosts": 1) maintenance or reservoir hosts 2) incidental or accidental hosts.

A "maintenance host" is an animal that can carry and spread the leptospirosis organism but not experience any obvious sickness from it. These are also known as "reservoir hosts" because this animal's immune system allows the leptospires to survive and duplicate themselves then be excreted in urine and spread to other animals. Maintenance hosts for leptospires are often wildlife species including skunks, rats, raccoons, and opossums but can be domestic animals (dogs) or livestock (pigs, cattle), depending on which type of leptospire (known as a "serovar") is involved (Table 1). For example, cattle serve as the maintenance host for the *Leptospira* serovar called "Hardjo type hardjo-bovis", often abbreviated as "Hardjo". Transmission from one infected cow to another healthy cow with serovar Hardjo is efficient, and the infection rate can be very high in an unvaccinated herd. When a cow is initially infected with serovar Hardjo, she may exhibit a few mild signs such as low fever but there will be very little antibody production by the immune system and the leptospires will stay primarily in the kidney and be persistently shed in her urine for a prolonged period of time (months to years). In addition, the organism can also localize in male and female

reproductive tracts and be shed in semen and uterine discharges.

An "incidental host" or "accidental host" is an animal that gets infected with a *Leptospira* serovar not normally found in that animal (infected "by accident") which results in clinical disease that may be severe. Incidental hosts are not reservoirs of infection and transmission of the organism is uncommon within a herd. Infection of an incidental host usually occurs in areas contaminated with urine from maintenance hosts. For example, cattle are incidental hosts for the *Leptospira* serovar "Pomona" which is carried by feral swine, opossums, skunks, and raccoons (the maintenance hosts) and transmitted to cattle from water or feed contaminated with their urine. Once infected, cattle (especially calves) with Pomona often show significant signs of disease, the immune system rapidly produces antibodies and there is a short carrier state in the kidney when cattle shed the organism in urine.

What are the symptoms of leptospirosis? Clinical signs or symptoms of disease in cattle depend on which *Leptospira* serovar is involved and if cattle serve as a maintenance host or incidental host for this specific type. There are over 250 serovars of *Leptospira* but the two most important serovars affecting cattle in North America are Hardjo and Pomona, with Grippotyphosa, Canicola and Icterohaemorrhagiae much less frequently diagnosed. Most bovine leptospirosis is caused by the serovar Hardjo, which causes infertility and reproductive failure. Cows with Hardjo are twice as likely to fail to conceive and experience a significantly longer time interval from calving to conception.

Infection in pregnant cows with non-Hardjo strains, mostly Pomona and Grippotyphosa, results in abortion (usually late term), stillbirth, or birth of premature and weak infected calves. Retention of fetal membranes may follow abortion. Lactating dairy cows may exhibit "milk drop syndrome", characterized as a drop in milk production for two to ten days where

the milk has the consistency of colostrum, thick clots, yellowish color, and high somatic cell count, but the udder remains soft. In calves, a severe, rapidly progressing disease may occur when infected with incidental serovars, especially Pomona. Symptoms of high fever, extreme weakness, red urine, rapid breathing due to anemia and death are all possible. Cows may experience a loss of milk production with very prolonged recovery.

How is leptospirosis diagnosed and treated? Diagnosis of this disease is not necessarily a simple task. Traditionally, two blood samples (in red top blood tubes) drawn at least one week apart after an abortion are submitted to measure antibodies against the most common serovars. Incidental infections (for example, Pomona) will show a rapid rise in antibody numbers (called "titers") over time that are diagnostic. However, since cattle are the maintenance host of serovar Hardjo, the antibody numbers may remain low if reproductive failure is due to Hardjo. Vaccination also confuses the interpretation of results because blood tests do not differentiate antibodies due to infection or antibodies due to vaccine. Therefore, multiple types of tests may be required to rule this disease in or out. Currently, urine is the preferred sample as it can be tested for leptospires through a variety of assays, especially PCR, to identify the organism. Animals diagnosed with leptospirosis can be treated with injectable long-acting oxytetracycline to remove the organism from the kidney. Research is ongoing if additional treatment is needed to clear infections within the genital tract. Consult your veterinarian for detailed advice regarding diagnosis and treatment options.

What methods are used to control and prevent leptospirosis in cattle? New infections are best prevented through early vaccination with products containing the most common serovars affecting cattle. The leptospirosis fraction of most reproductive vaccines is often denoted as "L 5" in the vaccine name, representing Hardjo, Pomona, Grippotyphosa, Canicola and

(Continued on page 9)

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**Vitamin A...**

(Continued from page 5)

As mentioned above, Vitamin A is very unstable and affected by many environmental factors. Mixing Vitamin A with trace minerals (particularly inorganic forms) increases the level of instability. When not mixed with a trace mineral, about 1% of the pure Vitamin A product potency is lost per month. After mixing, the losses can approach 9% per month. A trace mineral/ vitamin product purchased today may contain 50% less Vitamin A when fed six months later.

One common question about supplementation concerns administering an injectable Vitamin A product. In some cases, supplementing with this method does make sense. For example, a herd that is presently experiencing a deficiency can administer the injectable to those dams that have not calved which will have immediate effects. Another example would be when a herd has not been adequately supplemented and has been fed harvested forages for an extended period. The negative aspect of injectable Vitamin A is the short period of effectiveness. Vitamin A tissue levels are increased for about 1-2 months after administration; therefore, administration timing is critical. To help unborn and neonatal calves, administering to cows as close to expected calving would be appropriate. Excessive Vitamin A can be toxic; therefore, using your veterinarian's advice on product and dosage is very important.

**Summary:**

- Fresh, green forages contain large amounts of Vitamin A; therefore, supplementation levels during a normal pasture season are minimal.
- Once pastures have become dormant or when feeding harvested forages, Vitamin A supplementation

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levels need to be increased to the appropriate level.

- Considerations to normal supplement consumption amounts of most vitamin/trace mineral products, it is important that these products contain the appropriate level of Vitamin A.
- It is important that supplementation products be available to the cows at all times to optimize consumption levels.
- Minimize the storage of Vitamin A containing products to only a few months given the instability of this vitamin.
- Injectable Vitamin A can be beneficial in some cases, but appropriate dosage and timing is critical.

# Blach expects prices to go up in 2023

Source: Kansas Livestock Association

With a shrinking U.S. cattle supply and more shackle space available, cow-calf producers and feeders are starting to see leverage shift in their favor, CattleFax Chief Executive Officer Randy Blach told those attending Beef Industry University, which was sponsored by the Farm Credit Associations of Kansas in late 2022.

“We are seeing front-end supplies become as current as they’ve been in the past four to five years,” he said. “We should not be surprised if demand weakens slightly, but we still look for prices of all classes of cattle to be record high in the next three to four years.”

Blach predicted 2023 calf prices will go up, averaging \$225/cwt., with an annual range of \$200/cwt. to \$250/cwt.

“Cow-calf producers stand to increase profitability, and we continue to see a wide price spread, with premiums for those who are focused on using genetic selection to produce high-quality beef,” he said. “We’ve seen record

price signals demanding more of that product, so that will be a major opportunity for those who make that investment to get paid.”

According to Blach, average feeder prices are expected to range from \$180/cwt. to \$215/cwt., with fed cattle prices increasing to \$156/cwt. He did warn, however, that the recent

drought-induced cow liquidation means cattle on feed numbers will be down 3% to 5% next year, which could be beneficial to some and unfavorable to others.

“This could be a profitable stage of the cycle for those who retain ownership of cattle in the feedyard,” Blach said. “But, it could be a tough stage for feedyard operators.”



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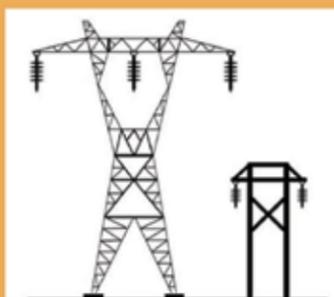
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## Reproductive...

(Continued from page 8)

Icterohaemorrhagiae. In addition, several vaccine manufacturers have added extra protection against serovar Hardjo type hardjo-bovis and this is denoted with “HB” in the vaccine name. Spirovac® (Zoetis) is a vaccine for Leptospirosis only, specifically for the prevention of infection by *Leptospira borgpetersenii* serovar Hardjo type hardjo-bovis, including reproductive and renal tract colonization, and urinary shedding for up to 12 months. It is worth mentioning that cattle already infected with leptospirosis must be treated with antibiotics first to remove the organism before vaccination is effective.

Control is accomplished by prevention of exposure, annual vaccination and treatment if needed. Reduction of cattle exposure to infected urine, especially fencing off stagnant ponds and swampy areas, and preventing urine contamination of feedstuffs will significantly reduce transmission of the organism. Personal protective equipment should be used when working with cattle suspected to be infected to prevent human disease.

# Food predictions for 2023

By Kirstan Hollinsworth, Oklahoma State University Extension

Tastes change – often quickly and sometimes drastically. It’s exciting to learn about the next big thing in the food industry. Last year, interactive foods and celebrity food collaborations were all the hype as numerous brands hopped on the bandwagon.

Whether it’s an innovative cooking method or a convenient way to enjoy bread and butter, upcoming trends can be hard to predict, but creativity is always on the rise.

Avocado oil and butter boards are on the menu for 2023, as the Oklahoma State University Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) highlights popular food trends for the upcoming year.

Andrea Graves, business planning and marketing specialist, said there is a lot of potential for new markets in the food industry.

“Food manufacturers should pay attention to food trends for it can open up new markets for their products and gain new customers,” Graves said. “Staying informed has the potential to make them a lot of money.”

**Check out the top 10 trends for 2023, according to FAPC:**

**Steam Ovens:** Steam ovens, also known as combination or smart ovens, are used to preserve moisture and nutrients of food without the need for oil or butter. Cooking with steam is a healthy alternative to a microwave and a great way to prepare just about anything.

**Butter boards:** It’s no surprise charcuterie boards are a crowd-pleasing and top-ranked appetizer, but meats and cheeses aren’t the only popular ingredients. Butter boards are the latest trend where a layer of softened butter is spread on a wooden tray. The layer of butter is then garnished with garlic, spices and herbs. Bread is served alongside the butter.

**Pasta alternatives:** Chickpeas, lentils and pulses are becoming more popular in plant-based pasta recipes. Low-carb dishes such as spaghetti squash, zucchini pasta and sweet potato pasta are health-conscious pasta alternatives.

**Food delivery robots:** Food technology has dramatically changed the food industry. Before the pandemic, food delivery robots were less popular, but with an increase in contactless food delivery demands, robots are

becoming more common for delivering food across college campuses and cities. In 2023, delivery services will be challenged to adapt and provide sustainable solutions that reduce waste and pollution.

**Dates:** As a rich source of protective plant compounds, dates are showing up more and more in commercial products and as a staple ingredient. Enjoy dates as a snack, on their own, or find

them used as a natural sweetener in the form of syrups and sauces. Food influencers are quick to share recipes of chocolate-covered or stuffed dates, and the creativity will continue in the new year.

**Adventurous dining:** After cooking at home throughout the pandemic, everyone is relishing the fact that indoor restaurant dining is back. A massive rise in dining that offers an experience is expected in the coming

year. Dinner theater restaurants are one experience that can spice up a meal.

**Pickle-flavored foods:** When exploring a grocery store, it is common to find a variety of pickle-flavored snacks, ranging from potato chips to candy. Some of the most delicious pickle-flavored foods include pickle pistachios, salsa and popcorn seasoning. In 2023, more products are predicted to hit the shelves for pickle lovers



Butter boards will be one of the trendy food items in 2023.

everywhere.

**Meal subscriptions:** While the food delivery trends are constantly chang-

ing, food delivery subscription services are one trend that will keep growing for (Continued on page 11)

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Sale

# FOUNDATION ANGUS ALLIANCE

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# More than 8,000 homes saved during 2022 wildfire season

## Texas A&M Forest Service, fire crews and residents stand together to protect homes across the state from wildfire

By Darren Benson, Texas A&M Forest Service

Barbara Peeler credits firefighters with saving her family's ranch.

When a fire started on a highway bordering the A.M. Peeler Ranch in southern Atascosa County in March, Peeler said the response from emergency crews was swift and powerful.

The fire, which burned 2,900 acres, spread rapidly in tall grass and thick brush. However, it never threatened structures, thanks to the efforts of the Texas A&M Forest Service and local volunteer fire departments, she said.

"The response was unbe-

lievable," Peeler said. "They had multiple fire departments, bulldozers, helicopters, a big airplane. It could have gotten to some structures, but they caught it in time."

**Protection starts with homeowners**

Fire officials have iden-

tified property owners as the primary line of defense in protecting their homes before a wildfire starts.

Since Jan. 1, Texas A&M Forest Service and local fire departments have responded to 11,679 wildfires that have burned 643,206 acres across the state.



Defensible space is critical to improving the chances a home can survive a wildfire. (Texas A&M Forest Service photo)

In that time, firefighters saved 8,056 homes in the path

of wildfire. Many of those homes had the first layers of protection — defensible space and fire-resistant construction materials — before firefighters arrived.

Defensible space — the area around a home that has been cleared of vegetation and other combustible material to provide a barrier against a wildfire — is critical to improving the chances a home can survive a wildfire, said Erin O'Connor, Texas A&M Forest Service public information officer.

"Property owners can make a major difference in the threat their homes face from wildfire by taking action well before a fire ever starts," O'Connor said. "Anyone can make their home and community more fire resistant through landscaping and home maintenance tech-

(Continued on page 17)

### Food...

(Continued from page 10)

years to come. Delivery subscriptions are popular because they offer convenience for busy families and provide a variety of choices with hundreds of meal options. In a competitive market, prices are becoming more affordable.

**Avocado oil:** The nutty flavor and buttery texture of avocado oil has made it a staple in pantries for years. As an alternative to olive oil, avocado oil is finally going mainstream in packaged products across the board. In 2023, this household staple is making its way into salad dressings, mayo, chips and more.

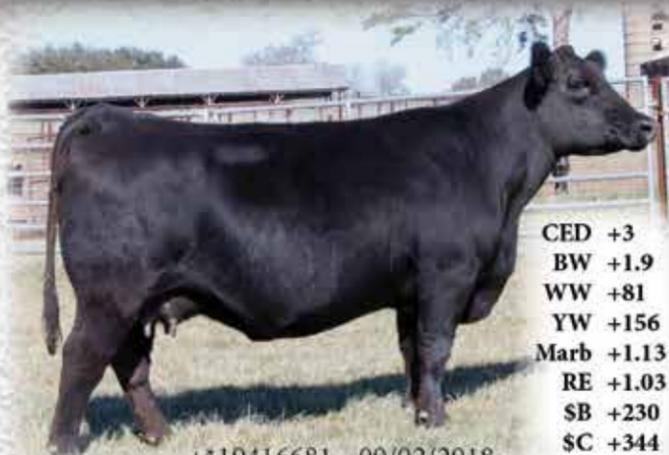
**Dirty soda:** Carbonated drinks have become a craze on social media and are predicted to fizz into the new year. The trend originates in Utah and consists of soda, cream and flavored syrup or some type of sweetener. There are endless ways to customize this sweet drink to your liking, and shops specializing in dirty soda are popping up in states like Texas, Oklahoma and Arizona.

# FEBRUARY 18, 2023

1 PM on CCI

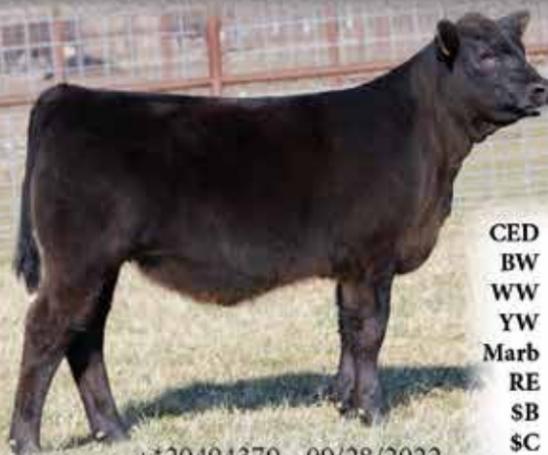
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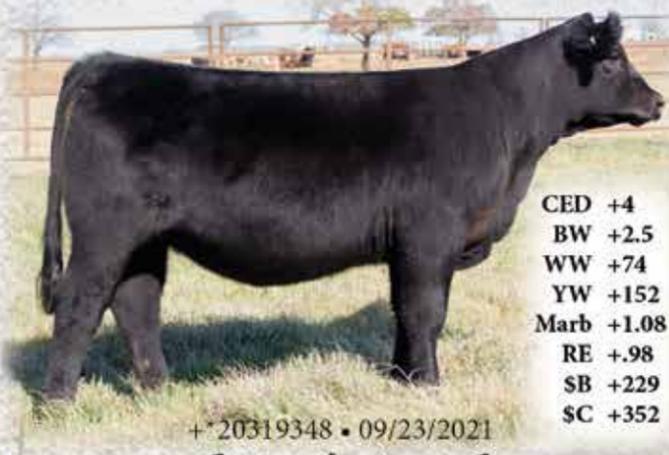
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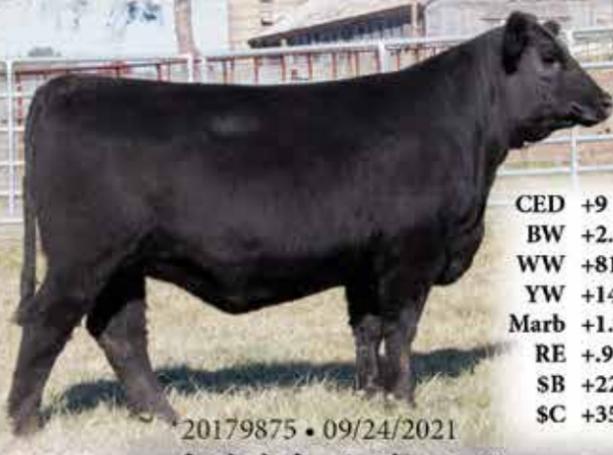
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*LCC Lady Fireball*

CED +9  
 BW +2.8  
 WW +81  
 YW +141  
 Marb +1.65  
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Contact Luling Foundation to request a sale book.  
 Mike Kuck 512-844-6415

EPDs as of 12/30/22

# Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas

## ROUND-UP REVIEW

P.O. Box 1168 / 220 W. San Antonio St.  
Lockhart, Texas 78644-1168

August, 2022  
512/620-0162

www.icatexas.com  
email: tica@icatexas.com

### Chapter Happenings... Around The Lone Star State

#### East Texas ICA Chapter News

The members of the East Texas Chapter of ICA met Dec. 6 at the 1855 Steakhouse and Saloon, Palestine, Texas

Chapter president Kimberly Ratcliff and Andy Young, vice president, welcomed 30+ members and guests to an informative meeting and festive Christmas party.

Bubba Brummit, Jr. of El Dorado Chemical Company updated ranchers on the current and projected prices for fertilizer components and fertilizer blends. Andy Young provided ranchers with an overview of the availability of grass seed and forage blends for those ranchers considering planting cover crops. ICA Executive Director Cooper Little gave guests and prospective members an introduction to the workings of ICA on behalf of the cattle producers of Texas, with an opportunity for them to sign up as members during the meeting.

Chef Scott Bollinger prepared a meal of sirloin, potatoes, green beans, salad, yeast rolls, tea and coffee. The meal was sponsored by El Dorado Chemical Company.

The light-hearted Christmas party was highlighted with a "Takeaway Santa" game, followed by a drawing for door prizes.

The next meeting will be held Feb. 7, 2023, at the 1855 Steakhouse and Saloon, 555 East Palestine Avenue, Palestine, Texas. The meal will be sponsored by Rozelle Sprayers and will begin at 6:30 p.m. Application has been made for continuing education credits through AgriLife, with approval pending.

#### Submitted by Marie Reed South Central Texas ICA Chapter News

Happy New Year from all of us at SCTICA! We are looking forward to a great year and are ready to kick it off with our first member meeting on Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023, at the Poth Catholic Church Parish Hall with dinner at 6:30 pm. More in-

### President's Address... By: Kerry Wiggins

Greetings and Happy New Year!

Hopefully, everyone had a blessed and safe Christmas and New Year's. We certainly welcome the end of year rain and how nice to have the tanks full.

Year-end brings the livestock sales market to a slower or closed pace but should pick up the new year gets underway. I imagine that there will be a good market for females into the spring months, especially as the pastures and tanks being repaired.

formation will be coming your way. The speaker for the January meeting will be Blaise Korzekwa, Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologist for Karnes and Wilson Counties and we are working on giving one CEU.

New officers will be elected and if you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Laurie Miller, current chapter president, at 210/215-1147. Again we wish you the happiest, safest and healthiest 2023.

Happy Trails, Laurie Miller

#### Guada-Coma ICA Chapter News

Greetings to all, a Happy New Year and blessings to all.

### Executive Director's Report... By: Cooper Little

The Texas Legislature reconvenes for the 88th Legislative Session January 2023, and rural Texas will again be fighting at a disadvantage, after losing several rural seats in the State House from redistricting to urban population growth.

However, your ICA staff, officers, directors and our legislative partners will be in Austin around the clock to familiarize newly elected members and the legislature as a whole on all issues important to private property owners, cattle producers, and our rural Texas communities. You can be certain that animal rights activists will be fighting us every step of the way, attempting to define your livestock as pets and mandate your ranches be open for public inspections.

Many of us used to live in communities we consider rural but are now rapidly faced with the realities of urban expansion and the consequences that come with

and after. Much kudos, Allan with your lap top and printer, Greg at the front desk kept the line moving well and folks being able to use their credit cards this year made a difference. A big thank you Cooper Little for attending and set-

it, such as abuses exercising eminent domain law. ICA will fight tooth and nail to preserve private property rights in the state legislature but please know powerful lobbyists representing those large urban cities (Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin) and other metropolitan areas will be fighting just as hard against us and they are armed with near limitless financial resources.

Preserving private property rights, limiting eminent domain authority, no new taxes, and establishing a 'right to farm' constitutional amendment are key ICA priorities this session. Lastly but just as important, we are committed to ending the marketing abuses cell-cultured and plant-based fake meat products use to mislead consumers through false labeling. Putting an end to their marketing strategy of stealing the good name of livestock producers while simultaneously slandering the traditional beef producer.

ting up the display for ICA and to all our great members who helped in many ways.

This may be my last report on chapter news. I am transitioning my position to multi-tasking by several folks. I am

(Continued on page 14)

#### 2022-2023 Executive Board

Kerry Wiggins, President Austin, TX	Curtis Calhoun, Treasurer Georgetown, TX	Chuck Kiker, Executive Member-At-Large Beaumont, TX
J.Storme Birdwell, Secretary Hamshire, TX	Brian Malaer, 2nd Vice President Harwood, TX	Carl Glass, Executive Member-At-Large Skidmore, TX
Darrell Sklar, 1st Vice President Edna, TX	Brad Cotton, Past President Floresville, TX	Paul Looney, Executive Member-At-Large Mineral, TX

#### 2022-2023 Board of Directors

James Alford College Station, TX	Bill Breeding Miami, TX	Dr. Jason Cleere Madisonville, TX	Ron Denham Plum, TX
Horace Drisdale Plum, TX	Jeff Gau Round Top, TX	Gus Gonzalez Poteet, TX	Susan Gonzalez Poteet, TX
Lyndon Homann Lockhart, TX	Rafe Jackson Gonzales, TX	Tommy Jackson Luling, TX	Carilyn John Seguin, TX
David Karisch La Grange, TX	Dr. Sammy Knippa Seguin, TX	Lindsey Lee Edna, TX	Bracken Marburger Milano, TX
Daryl McCarty West Point, TX	Thrina McCarty West Point, TX	Laurie Miller Poth, TX	Brenda Moore La Vernia, TX
Kyle Motal Victoria, TX	Doug Muenchow Floresville, TX	Leroy Muenich Seguin, TX	Richard Niemann Flatonia, TX
Jackie Parsons Victoria, TX	Kimberly Ratcliff Oakwood, TX	Glen Sachtleben Gonzales, TX	Greg Seidenberger Seguin, TX
Bill Selman Lockhart, TX	Dr. Glen Tate Adkins, TX	Dr. James Tiemann La Grange, TX	Schuyler Wight Goldsmith, TX
Chloe Wilson Sabinal, TX			

#### DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Tom Beard Alpine, TX	Dr. Larry Boleman College Station, TX	Curtis Calhoun Georgetown, TX	Verlin Callahan Bastrop, TX
Harold Clubb Hamshire, TX	Joe Conti, Jr. Victoria, TX	Peanut Gillfillian Stowell, TX	Tommy Guerra Roma, TX
Richard Hodge Pledger, TX	Bill Hyman Gonzales, TX	Connie Jacob Victoria, TX	Chuck Kiker Beaumont, TX
Paul Looney Mineral, TX	Benno Luensmann Seguin, TX	Bob Nunley, Jr. Sabinal, TX	Richard Nunley Sabinal, TX
Dr. Joe Paschal Corpus Christi, TX	Charlie Price Oakwood, TX	Bill Quinney Gonzales, TX	Phil Sadler Alba, TX
Jim Selman Gonzales, TX	Darrell Sklar Edna, TX	Perry Winegeart Gonzales, TX	

#### CHAPTER PRESIDENT/DIRECTORS:

Colorado Valley ICA Steve Janda La Grange, TX	East Texas ICA Kimberly Ratcliff Oakwood, TX	Gonzales County ICA Perry Winegeart Gonzales, TX	Guada-Coma ICA Leroy Muenich Seguin, TX
Mid-Tex ICA Tommy Jackson Luling, TX	South Central Texas ICA Laurie Miller Poth, TX	Southeast Texas ICA William Kiker Beaumont, TX	Victoria Crossroads ICA Kylie Motal Victoria, TX

#### STATE STAFF:

Cooper Little, Executive Director CooperLittle@ICATexas.com	Dorothy Harper, Office Manager Breana Barton, Chapter Liaison
--	--

STATE OFFICE: PO Box 1168 220 W. San Antonio St. Lockhart, TX 78644  
www.ICATexas.com TICA@ICATexas.com Office: 512/620-0162

### INDEPENDENT CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

PO Box 1168 • Lockhart, TX 78644

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ranch Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

★ Wrangler \$125

★ Cattle Boss \$250

★ Junior/Collegiate \$50

T-shirt size \_\_\_\_\_

★ Rancher \$150

★ Extra Hand \$500

★ Top Hand \$1000

Recruited by: \_\_\_\_\_

AMEX/DISCOVER/MC/VISA \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date (MM/YY) \_\_\_\_\_ CV Code (3 digit code) \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Dues to Independent Cattlemen's Association are not deductible as a charitable contribution but may be deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense. A portion of dues, however, is not a necessary business expense to the extent that Independent Cattlemen's engages in lobbying. The nondeductible portion of dues is 15%.



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**Chapter...**

(Continued from page 12)

retiring my position, but will continue as a director for the state. This will be discussed at our Jan. 23, 2023 meeting at The Seguin Cattle Co.

Until next January, all stay healthy and bundle up.

Carilyn John signing off

**Victoria-Crossroads ICA Chapter News**

Victoria – Crossroads chapter held their 10 gun raffle drawing on Friday, Dec. 16th. We streamed it on Facebook live and we all had a great fun time! Thank you to everyone who purchased a raffle ticket and special thanks to our members for pushing the selling of the tickets. It was a successful raffle for our chapter! We ap-

preciate everyone's support. Our next meeting will be Jan. 26th at Frances Marie's restaurant at 6 p.m. Robert Nix from Merck will be our speaker. A complimentary meal will be served. Mark your calendars for April 22nd for our chapter fundraiser, you don't want to miss it. More details to come in the next few months. Wishing everyone a Happy New Year!

Thank you,  
Kyle Motal

**Mid-Texas ICA Chapter News**

Mid-Tex Chapter will be meeting in Jan. on the 17th from 6:30-8:00 p.m. There is a venue change this month as we will be meeting at the Lockhart Sale Barn, 2601 Hwy 183 in Lockhart. Our guest speaker is Patrick Dudley from Texas Agriculture Commission. Dinner is being sponsored by the Lockhart Auction Barn and we will have interesting door prizes this month. We welcome one and all and hope that you will bring a potential new member with you. Please RSVP to the ICA office, 512/620-0162 or email TICA@ICATexas.com by Jan. 16th. Looking forward to discussions about fundraising and membership.

Madi Bexley, secretary

**Colorado Valley ICA Chapter News**

Our chapter will host a "Beef-It's What's For Dinner" event, on Saturday, Feb. 11th at the La Grange KC Hall. There will be a trade show from 4 -6 p.m., a silent auction from 4-6:30 p.m., a barbeque beef meal at 6:30 p.m. and a gun raffle at 6:30 p.m. There will also be an auction, following the meal. Cash door prizes will be awarded, also. If you are interested in being an exhibitor or sponsor, please reach out to an officer and more details coming in the new year.

Submitted by Steve Janda  
**Southeast Texas ICA Chapter News**

We are excited to announce information for the 28th Annual SETICA Commercial Bull & Heifer Sale. This sale will take place on Saturday, March 11th at the Ford Park Complex in Beaumont, Texas.

Please note that this year hard copy catalogs will not be mailed out like they have been in the past. Catalogs will be available by request only. Electronic copies can be emailed or downloaded.

Consignments are now being accepted. For more information visit <https://icatexas.com/events/>.

Submitted by Debbie Riley

**SWOT analysis for your ranch and you**

By Krista Ehlert

With any approaching new year, there are grand plans of going to the gym, drinking less, eating more vegetables, and so on. And while those are great goals, they mean little and might not get accomplished if there isn't a plan behind them. The same can be said of your operation. Maybe next year is the year you want to expand your herd, pay off debt, or finally replace that fence line that keeps coming down.

Whatever the goal is, if there's no plan to get it done, it will fall by the wayside of "someday." The best way to develop a plan to reach your goals is to figure out your operation's baseline. Where is it now?

**What is a SWOT Analysis?**

A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is something that you can sit down and complete during the last few months of this year, so that you can set your operation up for success as we move into the more hectic times that spring brings. A SWOT analysis is essential.

not only for your operation, but yourself. Agriculture is notorious for being stressful. How did this year feel? Did it feel like your operation was just surviving? Was your stress level at an all-time high? What were the effects on your family? Reflection and analysis are hard. Really hard. But we don't learn from our experiences, we learn from *reflecting* on our experiences.

The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to identify internal and external trends – whether they are positive or negative, helpful or harmful to your operation. Completing a SWOT also allows you and your team members (family, business partners, etc.) to identify the environmental, physical, and political climate of the farm business – maybe everyone is on the same page with the conservation strategy and doing the EQIP program, but maybe your son isn't too keen on how the new hired man does things. Once you complete a SWOT analysis, you can determine if something will assist your operation in

achieving the goals you set for it (a strength or opportunity) or if there's an obstacle to overcome or minimize to achieve your goals (a weakness or threat).

**Strengths and weaknesses**

The first two parts of a SWOT analysis, strengths and weaknesses, typically focus on the inner workings of your operation – these are things that are typically within your control. Strengths help you carry out your operation's vision, while weaknesses are the exact opposite – they are deficiencies in competencies and resources that limit how far your operation can carry out its vision. Some examples of strengths could be that your operation practices low-stress animal handling and that your wife has an accounting degree, so she's able to handle the books. Weaknesses could be that there is no transition plan in place for when you need to pass the operation to your children or that your off-ranch sister is asking for

(Continued on page 15)



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**Southeast Texas Independent Cattlemen's Association**



**28th Annual Commercial Bull & Heifer Sale**

**Saturday, March 11, 2023**  
**Ford Park Complex • Beaumont, TX**  
**Troy Robinett, Auctioneer**

Bull Sale at 10 a.m. • Heifer Sale at 1 p.m. (or immediately following bulls)  
 Cattle may be viewed after 5 p.m. Friday, March 10 and between 7-10 a.m. Sale Day



- Sale Offering of 90 Top Quality Breeding Age Bulls; All Bulls Will Be Test Negative for Trichomoniasis and Fertility Tested With Current Health Papers.
- Female Offering is expected to be at 300+ Commercial and Registered Breeding Age Females (Open, Bred & Pairs).

*Accepting Consignments thru 1/10/23*

- Forms and rules can be downloaded @ [www.icatexas.com](http://www.icatexas.com) or contact either of the secretaries listed below for more information.
- Sale Catalogs: Electronic versions should be available online around February 15, 2023 and via e-mail request. To be put on mailing list for hard-copy catalog, please contact the sale secretaries via phone or e-mail.
- The sale will be broadcast via **DVAuction**. If you cannot make the sale, you may register for a bid card and purchase via the online auction. If you plan to attend the auction, please **DO NOT** register for a bid card at **DVAuction**.



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**SWOT...**

(Continued from page 14)

a bigger check at the end of the year. Below are some prompts to get you thinking about your operation's strengths and weaknesses.

**Questions to help you reflect on operation strengths:**

- What strengths does your operation have that make you competitive?
- Is the moral of your family and employees high?
- What natural resources does the ranch have?
- What do your customers see as your strengths? Why do they buy from you? (Don't be afraid to ask!)

**Questions to help you reflect on operation weaknesses:**

- What could you improve?
- What do competitors do better or differently than you?
- What resources are lacking? What needs to be developed more?
- What enterprise is least profitable?

**Opportunities and threats**

The last two parts of a SWOT analysis – *opportunities* and *threats* – require you to step outside your operation and look at it from an outsider's perspective. These are issues that you cannot control, but you can develop management strategies to enhance or reduce their impact to your operation. Opportunities are external *positive* circumstances, while threats are external *negative* circumstances that affect your operation. An opportunity could be that a new processing facility is opening in your area, which means that your trucking costs will likely decrease, or you may live close to a large metropolitan area with consumers that want local meat. Threats could be that an out-of-state owner just bought up the sections around your place, so you feel hemmed in. Or, there could be a threat from key relationships that are floundering – between yourself and your spouse, or between you and your ranch hand. Whatever the threat, you should work to develop a plan to resolve the problem. Or, find ways to practice acceptance. Below are some prompts to get you thinking about your operations opportunities and threats.

**Questions to help you reflect on operation opportunities:**

- Are there new technologies that you can use to lower costs?
- What networking can I develop further to leverage for my operation?
- Are there new government policies or programs

that will help me achieve my goals and improve my operation?

• Is there a new consumer 'trend' that is predicted to be around for a long time? What ways could I capitalize on that?

**Questions to help you reflect on operation threats:**

- What new regulations do I need to be aware of? How will they impact me?
- Do I have bad debt or problems with cash flow?
- Are all my employees appropriately trained and motivated?
- Is the operation producing too many different

commodities? Do we need to focus more?

**In summary**

Remember, there are no set guidelines for completing a SWOT analysis – it serves as one starting place for looking at your operation holistically. Completing a SWOT analysis allows you to evaluate the current position of your operation and decide on management strategies that will help you achieve your goals for next year. Doing this now at the beginning of the year can help you get out of a "survival mode" and into a "strategic mode" – are you ready to make some changes?

**Texas A&M AgriLife appoints new director of Center for Grazinglands and Ranch Management**

**Research and outreach to focus on producer-identified challenges**

By Sarah Fuller, Texas AgriLife Today

As land management challenges evolve, so too must the tools and critical resources Texas A&M AgriLife provides land managers and producers.

With more than two decades of nationally recog-

nized rangeland conservation and outreach experience, Jeff Goodwin, Ph.D., has been tasked with facilitating this mission as director of the Center for Grazinglands and Ranch Management.

The center is housed

within the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

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(Continued on page 16)

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# High input costs and rising interest rates top concerns as ag sentiment remains unchanged

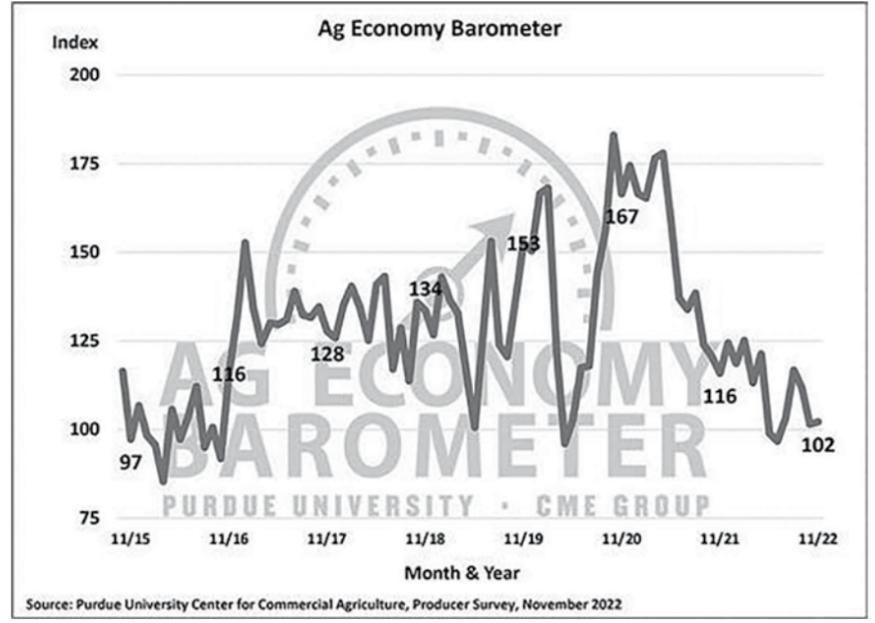
By James Mintert, Purdue University Department of Agricultural Economics

Unlike the two most recent presidential elections, the November mid-term election outcomes did little to swing farmer sentiment. The Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer came in at a reading of 102 in November, unchanged from October. There was however a slight movement in both of the barometer's sub-indices. The

Current Conditions Index declined 3 points to a reading of 98, while the Future Expectations Index increased 2 points to a reading of 104. The Ag Economy Barometer is calculated each month from 400 U.S. agricultural producers' responses to a telephone survey. This month's survey was conducted after the U.S. mid-term elections Nov. 14-18.

"Even though sentiment remained relatively unchanged in November, producers are continuing to look at their bottom line," said James Mintert, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture. "Rising interest rates combined with high input and

(Continued on page 18)



## Texas A&M...

(Continued from page 15)

A&M AgriLife Research, the center is part of a Texas A&M University System-wide effort to safeguard the ecologic and economic resiliency of grazing land resources and ranching operations.

Roel Lopez, Ph.D., Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management head, said Goodwin's appointment is part of a deliberate revitalization of the center and the Center for Natural Resources Information Technology to better serve producers across Texas and beyond.

"Producers are continually challenged by a changing environment, as well as variable markets," Goodwin said. "Having an integrated plan to most appropriately mitigate risk while balancing the ecologic and economic goals of ranching enterprises is critical as we move forward."

Goodwin said the center will provide producers the tools and information necessary to make more informed ranch management decisions through applied research, outreach, technical assistance and industry engagement.

Director brings an established reputation and ranch-scale opportunities

Goodwin, who earned a doctoral degree in rangeland and wildlife science from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, said he is focused on providing producers solutions to real-world problems.

He previously worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service throughout Texas, eventually holding the position of state range specialist. In 2014, he received the agency's national Rangeland Conservationist of the Year Award.

Following his tenure with the agency, Goodwin joined the Noble Research Institute, located in Ardmore, Oklahoma, as conservation stewardship lead and senior rangeland and pasture consultant.

In addition to developing many of the institute's land stewardship-focused programs across Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, Goodwin served as project lead in developing the McDonald's Corporation Flagship Farmer Program in the U.S. This global program recognizes producers within the McDonald's supply chain who implement sustainable land management practices and enables farmer-to-farmer

resource sharing.

While at Noble in 2021, Goodwin served as co-principal investigator and co-director of a \$19.2 million grant through the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research focused on the metrics, management and monitoring of pasture and grazing land soil health across 60 ranches in Texas, Oklahoma, Michigan and Wyoming.

With Goodwin's continued leadership of the grant, AgriLife Research joins this diverse research team. The collaborative research opportunities will help guide the future vision for the center.

"I want the center to be a facilitating agent," Goodwin said. "We will work to provide a framework to bring together the breadth of expertise within the Texas A&M system to address current, on-the-ground issues facing producers, as well as industry-level challenges that impact grazing lands and ranch enterprises in Texas and beyond."

Texas A&M students will also benefit from and enable the center's ongoing efforts.

Currently, the center and Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management are in the ini-

(Continued on page 18)

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## Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch online course now registering

### 12-week course begins Jan. 23

By Sarah Fuller, Texas AgriLife Today

The course fee is \$300, and online registration is required at <https://tx.ag/GenerationNext2023>. The course includes expert instruction on everything from starting a new agriculture business or enterprise to tax implications and insurance needs to developing grazing or wildlife leases.

"Land throughout Texas is changing hands all the time, and not everyone who

becomes a landowner is immersed in its history or agriculture production," said Megan Clayton, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension range specialist, Uvalde. "We've developed this Generation Next curriculum to target new landowners, those who are inheriting land or those who are looking to start a new agricultural operation on an existing ranch."

The Generation Next: Our

Turn to Ranch 12-week online course is open for registration. The program, offered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, takes place Jan. 23-April 16.

The online school enables participants to work toward developing a business plan with support from professionals who specialize in each field and topic, Clayton said.

She said participants can expect to spend roughly two hours per week on the lessons and activities, anytime day or night.

Enrollees will learn from experts regarding land management techniques and resources, alternative ranching, ecotourism opportunities and direct marketing. They will also learn how to set goals with measurable objectives for success.

Upon course completion, participants will have a useful business plan for their operation and receive a Generation Next certificate and T-shirt.

(Continued on page 18)

## More...

(Continued from page 11)

niques."

### Creating a defensible space

Creating a buffer of defensible space can slow or stop the spread of wildfires before they reach a home while providing safe areas in which firefighters can work to defend the structures.

Weldon Dent, Texas A&M Forest Service fuels specialist, said the area immediately surrounding the home is crucial in giving fire crews an advantage.

"What homeowners do in that first 5 feet around a home can make a difference," Dent said, pointing to a home in Eastland County that survived a March wildfire that destroyed more than 100 structures.

The owner of that home, tired of lawn maintenance chores, replaced the landscaping that immediately surrounded the home with gravel.

"The home itself wasn't all that fire resistant," Dent said. "Several homes around it were lost, and the shed in his backyard was burned in the fire. But the gravel is what saved the home."

With the state's population continuing to expand and more homes being built on the outskirts of communities, fire officials say it's critical for property owners to take the lead in preventing wildfires from turning catastrophic.

"As a direct result of a growing population, fluctuating weather patterns and changes in land use, the expanding threat of wildfires will continue to impact communities across Texas," said Wes Moorehead, Texas A&M Forest Service fire chief. "As homeowners implement these proven mitigation measures, they are actively working to reduce structural ignitability and to provide a

safe environment for firefighters to work. Texas A&M Forest Service is committed to working with communities, providing the necessary resources and information to empower people to reduce their risk from wildfire."

Learn more about defensible space and fire-resistant landscaping at <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/ProtectYourHome>.

### Small changes can make a big difference

Dent said the difference between structures that survive a wildfire and those that don't often comes down to a few preventive measures such as keeping yards and roofs clear of flammable vegetation and debris, managing the landscaping close to the house and installing mesh screens over vents to prevent embers from getting inside.

"It's usually a combination of a lot of little things," Dent said. "It's a struggle to get people to prepare in advance, but this is something you need to do all year long. If you do a little bit of maintenance throughout the year, when a fire does come, there won't be much you'll have to do."

He noted that if you need to evacuate your home during a fire, the chances of survivability are greatly increased.

Peeler said fire crews were called back to her property in July for a second fire that also started on a nearby highway. No structures were damaged in that fire, either.

She said firefighters have earned her family's respect and appreciation.

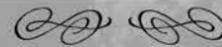
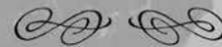
"This has been an unbelievable year. We have seen a lot of work by local firefighters, and I cannot give them credit enough," she said. "My message would be to support your firefighters. I cannot emphasize it enough. Support your fire departments. They are invaluable."



GENTLE

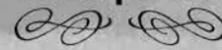
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### High input...

(Continued from page 16)

energy costs are creating a lot of uncertainty at the farm level.”

The Farm Financial Performance Index improved modestly this month to 91, up 5 points from October, but it remains 14% below this same time period last year. While nearly one-third of producers continue to express concern that their farm’s financial performance this year will be worse than the prior year, just over two-thirds of producers expect their farm’s 2022 financial performance to be equal to

or exceed 2021’s. Still, high input costs continue to weigh on producers’ minds with 42% of respondents in this month’s survey citing that as their top concern in the year ahead. Just over one-fifth (21%) of respondents chose rising interest rates, while 14% cited input availability and declining commodity prices as a top concern.

The Farm Capital Investment Index dropped back to its record low of 31 in November, erasing gains from the previous month. Nearly 80% of respondents indicated now is a “bad time” to make large investments

in farm machinery, and of those, 47% chose “rising prices of farm machinery and new construction” as the primary reason. By comparison, only 10% of respondents felt now is a “good time” to make large investments.

Given the sharp rise in energy prices that’s taken place this year, this month’s survey asked producers how they’ve responded to the cost increase. Just over one-fourth (27%) of this month’s respondents indicated they’ve made changes in their operation because of rising prices for energy. Of

those who indicated they made changes, 33% indicated they reduced tillage, 24% reduced nitrogen rates and/or changed application timing, 11% increased their use of no-till, and 8% said they reduced crop drying.

Farmland auction results in the Corn Belt continue to set new record highs, yet producers show signs of becoming less bullish on farmland values. The Short-Term Farmland Value Expectation Index declined 4 points to a reading of 129, and the Long-Term Farmland Value Expectation Index remained unchanged at 144.

Both indices are well below the highs established in fall 2021. When asked to look ahead one year, 12% of respondents this month said they expect values to decline compared to just 4% who felt that way a year ago. Among producers who expect farmland values to rise over the next 5 years, over half (52%) chose nonfarm investor demand as the primary reason for their optimism.

Read the full Ag Economy Barometer report at <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/Ageconomybarometer/high-input-costs-and-ris->

ing-interest-rates-top-concerns-as-farmer-sentiment-remains-unchanged/. The site also offers additional resources – such as past reports, charts and survey methodology – and a form to sign up for monthly barometer email updates and webinars.

### Texas A&M...

(Continued from page 16)

tial stages of implementing broad-scale case studies of grazing strategies and their associated ecologic and economic outcomes at Texas A&M’s 2,726-acre La Copita Research and Demonstration Ranch located in Jim Wells County.

Goodwin said the property provides a unique foundation for the research because it has not been actively grazed in a decade. In May, two department graduate students will begin baseline assessments of soil, vegetation and wildlife.

“This is an exciting time for both students and faculty across the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences,” Lopez said. “Jeff has shown great vision and made significant strides in revitalizing the center to reinforce our commitment to fulfilling the land-grant mission of Texas A&M.”

For more information on Center for Grazinglands and Ranch Management and current initiatives, contact Goodwin at [jeff.goodwin@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jeff.goodwin@ag.tamu.edu) or (979) 845-5000.

### Generation...

(Continued from page 17)

#### Praise from a past participant

Corrine Wright, a 2020 Generation Next alumna based in South Carolina, said although the program is designed with Texas landowners in mind, it offers a deep dive into the fundamentals of running an agricultural business applicable to new and semi-established landowners everywhere.

“As a new farmer, developing a business plan is very daunting,” Wright said. “I very much enjoyed the format of the class where each lesson built upon one aspect of the business plan, breaking it into smaller, manageable pieces.”

Two years later, Wright credits Generation Next with her ranch’s growth and maintains contact with Clayton and additional experts she met through the course.

For more information, contact Clayton at 830-988-6123 or [Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu).

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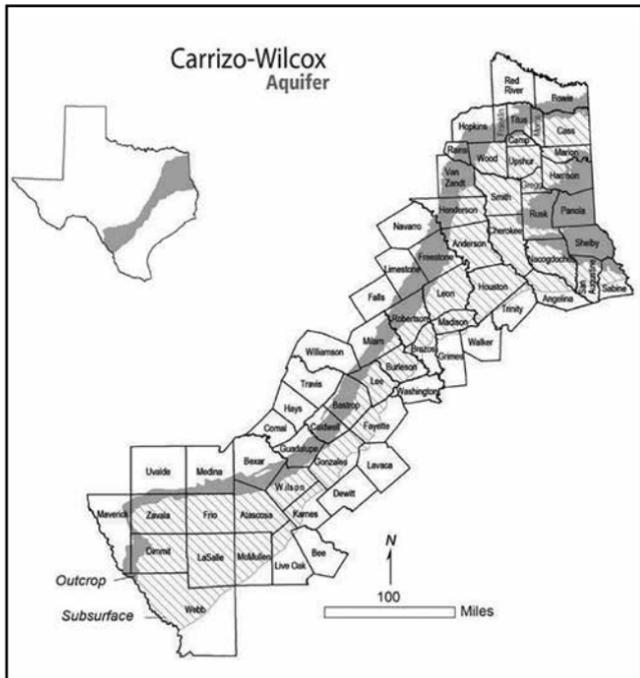
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# Woody thickets preventing water recharge in Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer

## AgriLife Research study shows 'thicketization' dramatically impacting water levels

By Adam Russell, Texas AgriLife Today

The expansion of woody plants across Texas' Post Oak Savannah is significantly reducing water recharge in the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer, according to a published article by Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists.

"Thicketized oak woodlands reduce groundwater recharge," which appeared in *Science of the Total Environment*, a journal of natural science, showed that thickets of woody plants such as yaupon and junipers are preventing rainfall from filtering into the aquifer and impacting water recharge rates

on regional levels. Bradford Wilcox, Ph.D., AgriLife Research professor of ecohydrology in the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology, Bryan-College Station, said the project that produced the published article has broad implications related to water availability and land stewardship throughout Texas.

Over the past 150 years, numerous land-use changes transformed native post oak savanna landscapes. These changes include cultivation and subsequent abandonment, altered fire regimes,

urbanization and land fragmentation. It also allowed undesirable plants, such as yaupon and junipers, to invade the understory, creating dense thickets of vegetation—a process described as thicketi-

zation. The expansion of woody plants across Texas' Post Oak Savannah is significantly reducing water recharge in the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer, (Continued on page 20)

Texas A&M University geoscience undergraduate student Chelsea Parada sets up a neutron probe for soil moisture measurements. Woody thickets like this one could be inhibiting water recharge in the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Shishir Basant)

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Woody...

(Continued from page 19)

according to a published article by Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists.

The published study stems from an AgriLife Research and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences project meant to shed light on how changes in land use and the encroachment of woody plant thickets are dramatically reducing ground-water recharge. The three-year project is funded by a \$750,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant.

Wilcox's collaborators include Briana Wyatt, Ph.D., soil scientist in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences; and Jason West, Ph.D., plant physiologist, and Sorin Popescu, Ph.D., professor of remote sensing, both in the Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology. They also include a team of graduate students, including post-doctoral scientist Shishir Basant, ecophysiology, who was the publication's lead author, and doctoral candidates Horia Olariu, remote sensing, and Mingxiu Wang, modeling, are conducting the study.

"The study demonstrated that thickening in the overlying recharge zone along the Post Oak Savannah allowed basically zero recharge into the aquifer and strongly suggests that the substantial change in vegetation along those sandy formations is impacting water levels in a major groundwater source," he said. "There had been some anecdotal evidence suggesting this might be happening, but now we have documented evidence."

**Carrizo-Wilcox historically important**

The Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer has long been utilized by private well owners, municipalities, agricultural producers and industry. It is the third most important groundwater resource in Texas after the Edwards and the Ogallala aquifers.

Recoverable water storage in the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer is estimated to be between 1.3 billion to 3.9 billion acre-feet. An acre-foot is the amount of water needed to cover 1 acre of land with water 1 foot deep, almost 326,000 gallons. By comparison, Toledo Bend, the largest surface-water reservoir in Texas, was designed for a total storage capacity of 4.6 million acre-feet.

The aquifer's water table has dropped more than 150 feet over the past several decades.

As land-use change and fragmentation continues to accelerate, Wilcox worries thickening will worsen unless land-owners and policymakers are made aware of its negative impacts.

The study will continue with assessments of other locations along the Post Oak Savannah conducted by Basant and a closer analysis of the data by Olariu and Wang to refine the extent of thickening along the aquifer's recharge zone. Researchers also want to determine how quickly thickening expanded across the region over the past 40 years.

"Now that we know thickening is impacting aquifer recharge rates, we will look at other sites and determine what percentage of the recharge zone is in a thickened state," Wilcox said. "It appears woody brush is expanding, but closer analysis puts us in a stronger position to provide evidence of thickening that might provide impetus for coordinated restoration efforts within the Post Oak Savannah."

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**LIVESTOCK SALES CALENDAR**

EDITOR'S NOTE: **Bold-faced listings have advertisements in this issue.**

- JAN 12 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Bull Offering, Shady Oak Farm Charolais & SimAngus Bulls, San Saba, TX
- JAN 13 Nueces County Jr. Livestock Show Commercial Heifer Sale, Robstown, TX
- JAN 14 Live Oak Beefmaster Breeders Association Bull Sale, Three Rivers, TX
- JAN 21 45th Cattleman Bull & Female Sale, El Campo, TX**

- MAR 2 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Bull Offering, Cattleman's Kind Bull Sale Simmental & SimAngus Bulls, San Saba, TX
- MAR 3 South Texas Beefmaster Breeders Association Houston Futurity Sale, Houston, TX
- MAR 4 South Texas Cattle Marketing Replacement Female Sale, Nixon, TX
- MAR 4 Genetic Edge Brangus Sale, Houston, TX
- MAR 8 R A Brown Ranch Spring Sale, Throckmorton, TX
- MAR 11 Southeast Texas Independent Cattlemen's Association Bull & Commercial Heifer Sale, Beaumont, TX**
- MAR 11 Cavender-Draggin' M and Partners Spring Brangus Bull Sale, Jacksonville, TX
- MAR 16 GKB Cattle & Barber Ranch Bull Sale, Desdemona, TX
- MAR 17-18 Mound Creek Ranch Brangus Bull & Female Sales, Leona, TX
- MAR 18 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX
- MAR 18 Live Oak BBA Spring Sale, Three Rivers, TX
- MAR 18 Texas Elite F-1 Sale, Caldwell, TX
- MAR 23 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Bull Offering, Knox Brothers Bull Sale, Hereford & Angus, San Saba, TX
- MAR 21 Flying S Herefords Production Sale, Paluxy, TX
- MAR 23 Texas Alliance Sale, Bloomington, TX
- MAR 25 Emmons Ranch Beefmaster Bull Sale, Groesbeck, TX
- MAR 28 GenePlus at Chimney Rock Spring Brangus Bull Sale, Concord, AR
- APR 1 Texas Brangus Breeders Assn Spring Sale, Salado, TX
- APR 6 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Bull Offering, STS Ranger Registered Angus Bulls, San Saba, TX
- APR 15 Jordan Cattle Auction Spring "Best of the Best" Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX
- APR 15 ACE @ Wiley Ranch & Louisiana Brangus Bull Sale, Effie, LA
- APR 23 Cavender-Draggin' M & Partners Spring Brangus Female Sales, Jacksonville, TX
- MAY 6 Jordan Cattle Auction May Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX
- MAY 6 Phillips Ranch-Fenco Ranch Spring Brangus Sale, Bunnell, FL
- MAY 6 Sale of Excellence Charolais Sale, College Station, TX
- MAY 11 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Stocker & Feeder Sale, San Saba, TX
- MAY 20 Swinging B & Friends Production Sale, Salado, TX
- MAY 20 Donors Unlimited Sale, Hereford, TX
- JUN 3 Jordan Cattle Auction June Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX
- JUN 10 Wallen Prairie Ranch Production Sale, Lockwood, MO
- JUN 10 ACE @ Quail Valley Farms Customer Appreciation Sale, Oneonta, AL
- JUN 15 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Stocker & Feeder Sale, San Saba, TX
- JUN 24 Southern Tradition XXIII Sale, Savannah, TN
- JUL 10 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Stocker & Feeder Sale, San Saba, TX
- JUL 13 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Stocker & Premium Weaned Sale, San Saba, TX

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- JAN 21 Jordan Cattle Auction Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX**

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**January Replacement Female Sale**  
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- JAN 21 Lavaca Co. 4-H & FFA Commercial Female Sale, Hallettsville, TX
- JAN 28 38th Annual DeWitt County All Breed Bull & Female Sale, Cuero, TX**

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- JAN 29 53rd Annual Powerhouse Sale, Ft. Worth, TX
- FEB 2 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Stocker & Feeder Sale, San Saba, TX
- FEB 4 South Texas Hereford Assn. Spring Sale, Beeville, TX**
- FEB 8 Thomas Charolais Spring Bull Sale, Raymondville, TX**
- FEB 9 Jordan Cattle Auction Special Bull Offering, Martin-Bruni Brangus & STS Ranger Registered Angus, San Saba, TX
- FEB 11 San Antonio Beefmaster Subasta, San Antonio, TX**
- FEB 11 Charolais For Profit Bull Sale, Columbus, TX**
- FEB 14 32nd Annual San Antonio Livestock Show All Breeds Bull Sale & Commercial Female Sale Judging, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, TX**
- FEB 15 32nd Annual San Antonio Livestock Show All Breeds Bull Sale & Commercial Female Sale, San Antonio Livestock Show, San Antonio, TX**
- FEB 18 Jordan Cattle Auction Early Spring Replacement Female Sale, San Saba, TX
- FEB 18 Beefmaster Border Classic V Sale, Edcouch, TX
- FEB 18 Foundation Angus Alliance Sale, Luling, TX**
- FEB 18 7P Ranch Annual Spring Bull Sale, Tyler, TX
- FEB 25 Hallettsville Livestock Commission Special Female Sale, Hallettsville, TX
- FEB 28 Perez Cattle Co. Bull Sale, Nara Visa, NM
- FEB 28 Houston International Simmental Simbrah Sale, Houston, TX
- MAR 1 Houston Livestock Show 56th Annual All Breeds Bull & Commercial Female Sale, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Houston, TX

**Upcoming Events**

• 2023 •

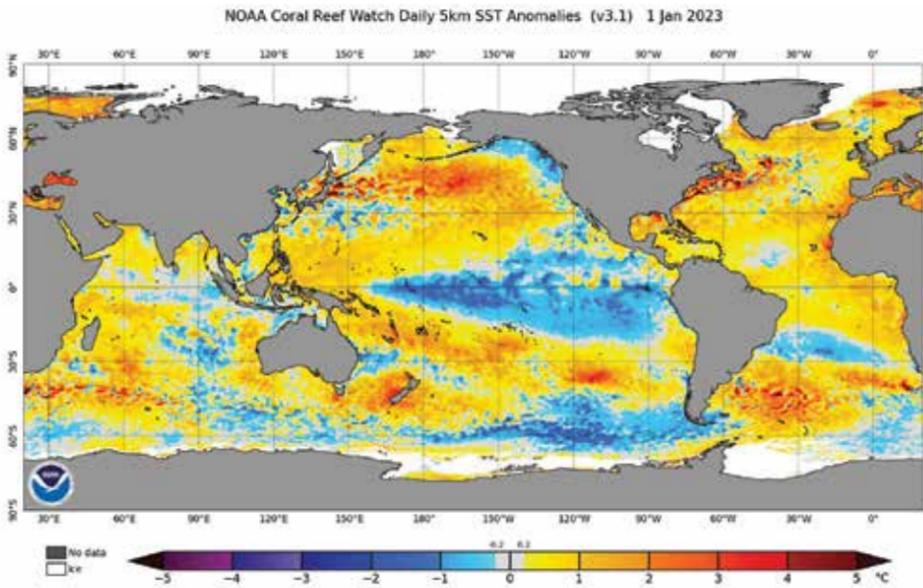
- JAN 13 - FEB 4 Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, Fort Worth, TX
- FEB 9-26 San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo, San Antonio, TX
- FEB 28-MAR 19 Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Houston, TX



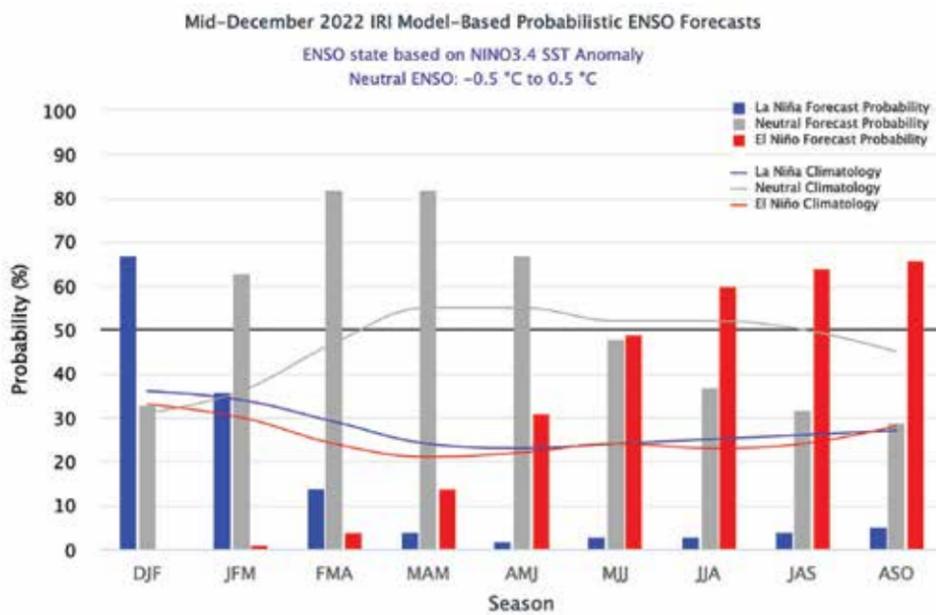
# WEATHER WISE

By Brian Bledsoe

Hey folks! Happy New Year! I hope you all are doing well. Let's check on the status of La Niña.



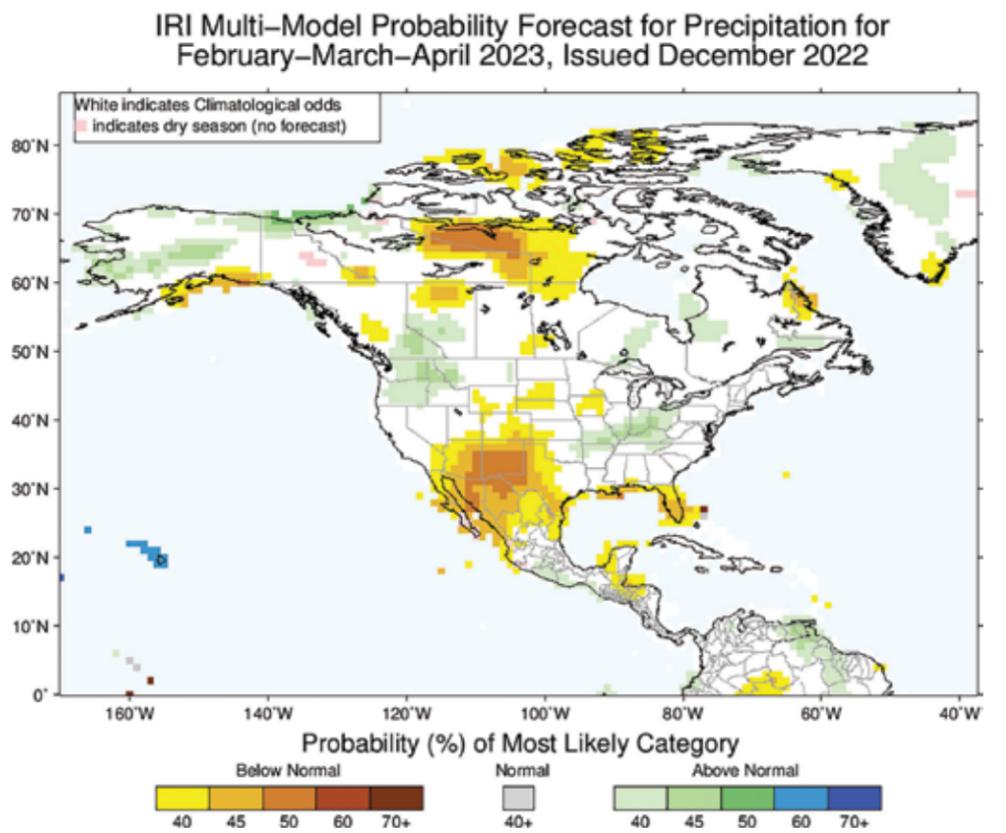
The image above shows that there is still quite a bit in the way of colder than average water along the equatorial Pacific Ocean. However, it is to a lesser degree than it was just a month ago. This is kind of what I thought would start to happen as we entered 2023. Are the latest models in agreement with the continued weakening? I'd say yes.



The image above shows the probabilities of La Niña (blue bars), neutral (gray bars), and El Niño (red bars). As you can see, La Niña probabilities essentially go to zero in the spring, and El Niño probabilities exceed 50% by later this summer. This is about as strong of a signal as you will see at this range... Good news!

Some of the latest computer models paint somewhat of a mixed signal in terms of precipitation this spring. The map below shows drier than average

conditions being favored for West Texas and most of the Southwest, with average precipitation favored farther east. The map below is a forecast for February, March, April.



This wouldn't be out of the ordinary, as the Pacific Ocean is still cool, regardless of whether La Niña is completely gone. That situation would favor drier than average conditions for the Southwest US.

At any rate, I like the direction we are headed. While it isn't perfect and it will take some time to get there, I am optimistic about 2023 and the end of La Niña.

**If you have any questions or comments, please drop me an email...  
Brian Bledsoe,  
brianbledsoewx@gmail.com**

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# Inflationary challenges affecting retail beef prices

By Blair Fannin, Texas AgriLife Today

Though retail beef prices are lower than a year ago, prices remain historically higher as inflationary challenges affect the overall U.S. economy and projected fewer cows heading into 2023, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service livestock economist.

“Retail beef prices are lower than a year ago even though the total Consumer Price Index number is 7.1% higher than last year,” Anderson said. “(Retail beef prices) have been lower for several months now. And they are lower than last month. However, the level of prices remains high in comparison to the past several decades.”

Anderson said there are signs that consumers are looking at alternative beef cuts as a cost-savings measure at the retail meat case.

“I think there’s evidence that consumers are switching to less expensive items,” he said. “For example, maybe buying fewer ribeye cuts and more less-expensive steaks or more ground beef. Overall, beef demand remains good, and people continue to buy. That’s one reason retail prices have remained high since folks are buying. The impact of higher costs throughout the economy and higher interest

rates will impact people’s budgets and people will buy less of all kinds of goods. That will bring down prices and inflation.”

Prime rib will continue to be featured on many dining tables this holiday season despite costing more, Anderson said.

“Prime rib, standing rib roasts make a great celebration/holiday dinner,” he said. “In fact, we are doing that at my house. They aren’t cheap,

though, but we are going to enjoy it and celebrate together.”

### Record beef production

As 2022 comes to an end, beef production across the U.S. has been at a record pace due to drought conditions over much of the country.

“We are on pace to produce a record amount of beef this year, over 28 billion pounds,” he said. “Production is up because of the drought, and higher production costs

are forcing ranchers to cull their herds. So, the increased number of culled cows and heifers are boosting beef production, for now. While production is high now, in the future we’ll have a lot less beef production as the impact of fewer cows and calves is felt.”

Meanwhile, wholesale beef prices are well below a year ago. The lower wholesale prices are very slowly translating into lower retail prices, Anderson said.

“Those lower prices should start to show up at grocery stores,” he said. “Beef has actually become relatively less expensive than pork and chicken in recent months as beef prices have declined.”

Wholesale chicken prices have declined dramatically in recent weeks and months due to rising production, Anderson said.

“Pork and chicken retail prices both declined from the previous month in the CPI

data, but they remain well above last year,” he said.

### Fewer cows projected for 2023

Anderson said the overall U.S. cow herd will see a 3% reduction compared to a year ago.

“We are headed to fewer cows in the U.S.,” he said. “Beef cow culling is up 28% in our region over a year ago. So, we are headed to tighter beef production and given biology we’ll have tighter beef production into at least 2025. Drought recovery and prices/costs that get ranchers back to some profits will be required to rebuild herds.”

## Start...

(Continued from page 23)

dedicated to productive cows.

“Multiple records and analysis can be used to evaluate cow herd productivity at weaning time,” said Davis. First, look at weaning percentage by comparing the number of weaned calves by the number of animals exposed during the previous breeding season. This evaluates calf death loss from calving to weaning.

There are multiple ways to analyze calf weaning weight as it relates to cattle herd productivity. These include

- Comparing pounds of weaned calves per cows exposed during the previous breeding season. This measurement ultimately tells cattle producers the productivity of their herds.

- Comparing calf weaning weight to cow body size at weaning. This is an indicator of how productive each cow is, which can be very useful for identifying productive females that should be retained and poor-producing females that should be removed to improve herd productivity.

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