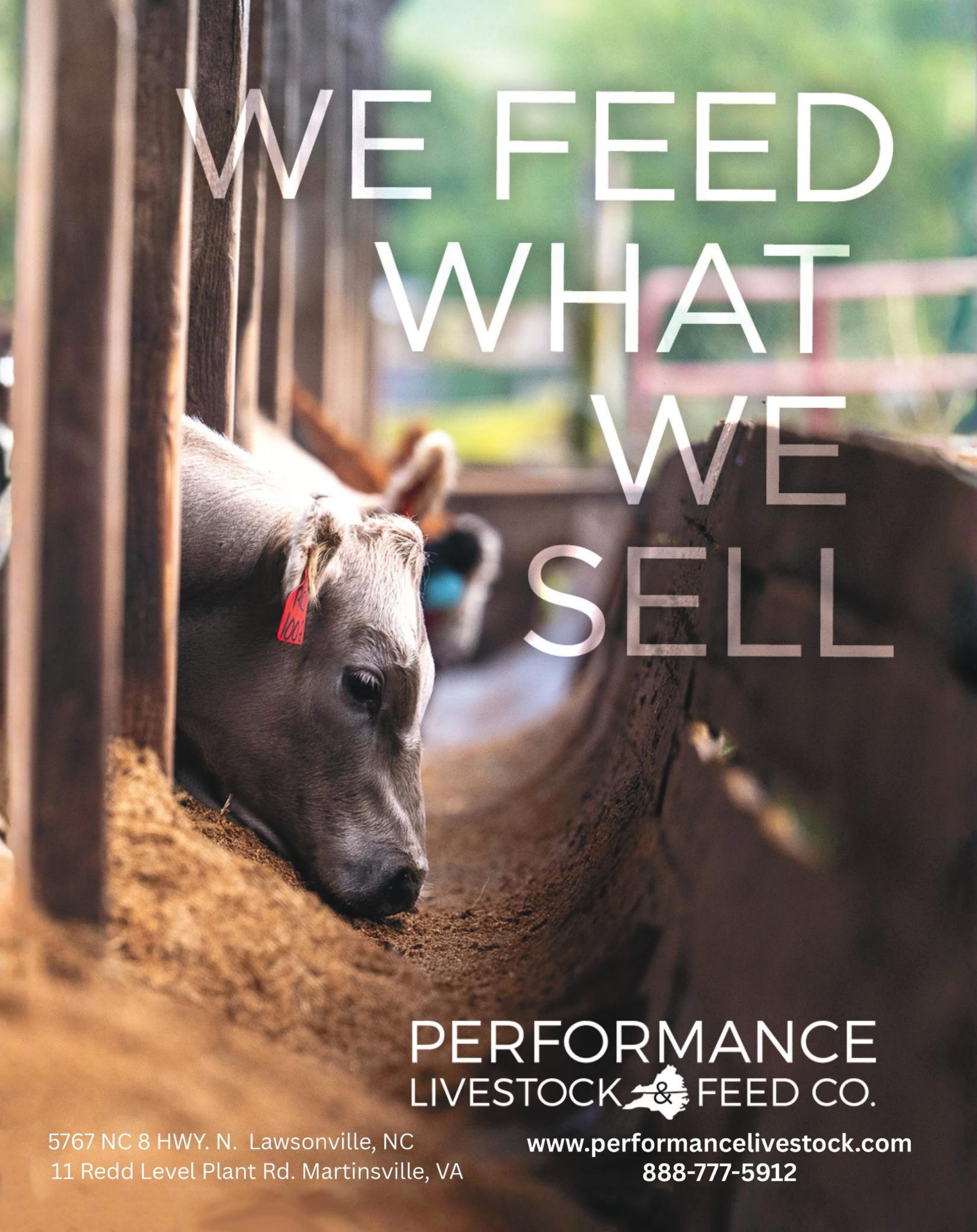




CAROLINA CATTLE CONNECTION

Spotlight on BRAHMAN

MAY 2026 • Vol. 40, Issue No. 5

A young goat with a red ear tag is resting its head on a wooden fence in a barn. The background is blurred, showing other animals and greenery outside.

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By AMBER STARNES, S.C. Cattlemen's Association

Director's Report

Early Summer Fly Control – Protecting Herd Health and Performance

As the temperatures rise and pastures green up, May signals the beginning of fly season in South Carolina. Flies are more than just a nuisance — they can reduce weight gain, stress cattle, and increase the risk of disease. Early planning and management are essential to keeping your herd healthy and productive. Here are some tips and reminders on managing flies on and around your cattle and operation.

Monitor and Identify Fly Populations – Regularly inspect pastures, barns, and water sources for signs of flies. Different species, like horn flies, face flies, and stable flies, require slightly different control methods. Early identification allows for targeted interventions before populations explode.

Implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – Combine multiple strategies to reduce fly pressure:

- **Pasture management** – Rotate grazing areas to disrupt fly breeding in manure heavy areas.
- **Sanitation** – Remove manure from confinement areas and

feedlots regularly.

- **Biological controls** – Consider beneficial insects like parasitic wasps that target fly larvae.

- **Chemical options** – Use approved insecticides, ear tags, sprays, or pour-ons thoughtfully — rotate active ingredients to prevent resistance.

Focus on Herd Comfort and Nutrition – Flies cause stress that can reduce feed intake and weight gain. Ensure adequate shade, clean water, and balanced nutrition to help cattle maintain performance during peak fly season.

Plan Ahead for Summer Management – Early intervention reduces the need for emergency treatments later in the season. Develop a fly management calendar and stick to a consistent schedule for monitoring, chemical treatments, and pasture rotation.

Proactive fly management is a small investment that delivers great value in cattle health, growth, and overall farm profitability. By acting early, producers can prevent fly related losses and ensure a smoother summer for both cattle and farmers.



SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

Brahman History – Crossbreeding’s Common Denominator

As the first beef breed developed in the United States, the American Brahman has played an important role, not only in crossbreeding programs throughout the United States and beyond. It has become a common thread among other American breeds developed in the last century. American Brahman influence in the beef industry is felt worldwide, and their genetics are sought by cattlemen on every continent. Their development is an unparalleled success story. Today’s cattlemen breed Brahmans for all the right reasons.

Originating from a nucleus of approximately 266 bulls and 22 females of several *Bos indicus* — cattle of India — types imported into the United States between 1854 and 1926. Today, the Brahman breed has achieved acceptance for their environmental adaptivity, longevity, mothering ability, and efficient beef production. *Bos indicus* cattle have been serving man for thousands of years. Throughout their evolution, they have endured famine, insect pests, diseases, and extreme temperature fluctuations. Thus, through natural selection, these cattle came to have the ability to survive and thrive where other types have failed. In their expansion, these cattle have improved beef production in every country in which they have been introduced, as they are mated to existing native cattle. While some 30 defined breeds or types of *Bos indicus* cattle have been identified in India, only a few of these breeds were selected to develop the American Brahman.

The first importation of Indian cattle of any notoriety came in 1854, when sugar and cotton farmer Richard Barrow of St.

Francisville, La., was presented with two bulls by the government of Great Britain for his services in teaching cotton and sugar cane production to British officials establishing these crops in the deltas of India. Their offspring, known as Barrow grade cattle, would achieve recognition, and their fame would soon spread around the globe. Later importations would see cattle brought from Brazil, where large numbers of these Indian cattle could be found.

The American Brahman Breeders Association was organized in 1924. J.W. Sartwelle of Houston was the first recording secretary of the Association, and it was he who proposed the word “Brahman” and, so, it was adopted as the name of the new beef breed. With strict selection, guided by the standard of excellence developed by founding breeders, the American Brahman has been recognized for its exceptional hardiness and physical stamina, its ability to profitably produce on marginal lands, to live twice as long as normally expected, and its unequalled performance in weight per day of age.

As consumers shift to lean meat and lower calorie diets, Brahmans are perfectly positioned to fill the demand for a beef product which efficiently converts feed into high quality beef while producing a carcass free of excess fat.

Hybrid Vigor – The American Brahman excels in adding hybrid vigor to their offspring when crossed with other breeds, resulting in more money in your pocket as a beef producer. Hybrid vigor (or heterosis) is an animal breeding or genetics term that is achieved by crossing two different strains, varieties, breeds, or species. In the cattle world, maximum hybrid vigor is obtained by crossing totally





unrelated animals, achieving the “best of both worlds.”

Because of this added hybrid vigor, the use of Brahman bulls with European or English breed cows is one of the most popular crossbreeding practices in the United States, with the resulting Brahman F1 calf in high demand by cattlemen for replacement females or feeders in the feedlot.

Years of crossbreeding research has consistently shown that ranchers get higher levels of heterosis when you cross a Brahman with a British or Continental breed, compared to just breeding British or Continental breeds to each other. Because of this, Brahman cattle are often referred to as crossbreeding’s common denominator. The Brahman F1 cross is consistently superior to other crosses in weight per day of age and carcass efficiency. The Brahman F1 is also very popular because these cattle display many important characteristics of their Brahman parent, such as drought resistance, heat tolerance, disease and parasite resistance, and increased longevity.

Queens of Cow Country – F1 Brahman females are maternal machines. They have increased milk production, higher fertility, and wean faster growing calves with fewer inputs. Plus, she will have a longer productive life, raising more calves over her lifetime than other breeds. In the feedlot, Brahman hybrid steers remain healthier and make the most rapid, efficient gains while producing heavier, higher yielding carcasses that are free of excess fat, which today’s packer and health conscious consumer demand.

Environmental Adaptability – Brahman have dark skin pigmentation, which filters the intense rays of the sun as well as keeps the breed free of cancer eye. Other environmental adaptations that make the Brahman breed so well suited to so many areas of the country include the ability to utilize lower quality feed, to travel longer distances for feed and water, and to resist insects and external parasites while withstanding vast climatic differences. They also have the ability to reproduce on a regular basis in a stressful environment. Brahman cattle show no effect from extremely high temperatures.

A factor that contributes to the Brahman’s unique ability to withstand temperature extremes is a short, thick, glossy hair coat that reflects much of the sun’s rays, allowing them to graze in the

midday sun without suffering. In severe winters, Brahman grow a protective covering of long, coarse hair beneath which a dense, downy, fur like undercoat can be found. An abundance of loose skin, characteristic of the breed, also aids in its ability to withstand warm weather by increasing the body surface area exposed to cooling. In cold weather, the skin is contracted, increasing the thickness of the hide and density of the hair, which aids in retaining body heat. A special feature of the Brahman breed is their ability over other breeds to sweat freely, which contributes greatly to their heat tolerance.

Gain Efficiency and Carcass Quality – Brahman hybrid calves and those out of Brahman F1 cows are noted for their fast gains, and it’s a fact that these calves consistently produce more weight per day of age than most other breed contemporaries. Brahman cross calves are more desirable to feed in many parts of the country during hot, humid months when the feed efficiency of European and British calves and crosses decreases. The ability of these Brahman cross cattle to finish during warm seasons is a definite economic factor in their favor.

While efficiency is an important quality of the Brahman and its crosses, the carcasses are known for their high cutability, which results in a high yielding carcass with limited fat. In a recent study conducted by Texas A&M, Angus and Hereford cows were bred to Brahman bulls. The resulting steers were handled as calf feds, going directly into the feedlot at weaning. The steers were fed for 180 days and slaughtered

Brahman History continued on the next page



Brahman History continued from the previous page

at 13–14 months. The first calf crops produced 89 steers, with no death loss experienced postweaning. Of those fed, 58 percent of the steers graded Choice, with the rest in the window of acceptability.

Tenderness readings using the Warner-Bratzler shear force test were taken at 0, 7, and 14 days. With this data, a rating of ten pounds or less is considered satisfactory for supermarket sales, while a rating of 8.7 pounds or less is desirable for steaks utilized in quality restaurants. Of the 89 samples, 84 were below the ten pound level at 14 days, with the best rating being 5.7 pounds.

Milk Production – Add more beef to your milk program with the American Brahman! The American Brahman is known the world over for their crossbreeding excellence; however, many dairy producers in the southern United States and South and Central America also utilize the American Brahman in crossbreeding with dairy breeds. These dual purpose animals are the future of the cattle industry in the tropics. Using American Brahmans in the tropics will result in adaptability, fertility, disease resistance, and longevity. American Brahman genetics give you heavier weaning weights, more quality beef, and more salvage value at production termination. They also add additional butter fat content and protein, as well as increased production and net income.

Recent crossbreeding reports from South America have shown the American Brahman to be an ideal cross with a variety of dairy breeds including Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss, and more.



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SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

American Brahman Breeders Association History

The American Brahman Breeders Association, based in Bryan, Tex., is the world registry for Brahman cattle — the #1 beef breed for efficiency, hybrid vigor, and environmental adaptability.

ABBA was founded in 1924 as the official breed registry of American Brahman cattle in the United States. Its original mission was to maintain parentage and ownership records of American Brahman cattle; however, through the years, it has grown to provide an array of member services, educational opportunities, and programs. Internationally recognized as a leading beef cattle association, ABBA offers a wide array of programs to assist the profitability of its members.

ABBA is a membership organization governed by an elected board of directors. Board members, as well as other volunteers, are assigned to committees that meet regularly to propose ideas for better serving members through programs, services, or activities. The ABBA staff and leaders are always looking for ways to improve the breed and the organization and welcome input from the membership.

International Ties –ABBA plays a crucial role in shaping the global presence of the Brahman breed. Each year, ABBA organizes competitions and sends American judges to events around the world, promoting the breed on an international scale.

Recognizing the Brahman breed's importance in the global beef industry, the USDA supports ABBA through Foreign Agricultural



Service (FAS) funds. These funds help facilitate educational seminars, judge requests, and trade missions to foster growth in international markets.

ABBA's international committee, comprised of dedicated volunteer members, works tirelessly to nurture traditional markets while seeking new opportunities for Brahman cattle to thrive worldwide. Through these efforts, ABBA ensures that the Brahman breed continues to expand its influence and success across the globe.

For more information about the Brahman breed or the many opportunities offered by ABBA, please contact our office or visit our website at www.brahman.org.



SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

Carolinas Brahman Breeders Association – Humble Beginnings

In 1980, a group of Carolina Brahman Breeder Association members got together in Lugoff, S.C., to hold the first CBBA sale day. Some 46 years later, this sale is still going strong.

Like most organizations, the CBBA started from humble beginnings.

The CBBA began in Concord, N.C., in the front yard of Lewis Patterson's house when several ranchers gathered to start an organization to bring quality Brahman cattle to the Carolinas. After meeting a few more times, the group decided to create a sale day to bring in new bloodlines and help ranchers create the best herd possible.

In the beginning, the sale involved people from the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and a few from Tennessee. Now that group has grown, and on sale day, you will find breeders from all over the United States attending the sale.



The founding members put sweat, blood, and tears into making sure the sale happened, no matter what, and this attitude of persistence can still be found in the CBBA directors and officers of today.

North Carolina CBBA Director Myra Morrison, of Morrison Farms in Rockwell, N.C., is one of the first members who gathered in Patterson's yard that day. She was at the first sale and has only missed one over the last 46 years. She has been able to see the sale grow without losing the purpose of providing good quality cattle.

"I think we have done exceptionally well, bringing in cattle that are good cattle to this sale. We don't worry so much about pedigree as we do about quality," Morrison said, "What we need is good quality cattle that will keep our herds around here working."

The sale grew so much over the past 20 years, the sale had to be held at the T. Ed Garrison Cattle Complex in Pendleton, S.C., to better fit the size. Clemson University offered a fantastic, modern facility that allows the sale to flow smoothly. However, after 2020, the sale moved to Laurens Livestock in Laurens, South Carolina.

"The staff at the barn accommodated us any way possible," Vice President of CBBA and great grandson of Patterson, John Cline, said. "We appreciate everything they do and look forward to working with them every year."

As the sale has grown, some new additions to the weekend





have been created. One event that everyone looks forward to is the Friday Night Fun Auction, created during the 25th anniversary of the sale. This auction helps raise money for the two scholarships the CBBA offers to college of agriculture students attending Clemson and N.C. State University. The secretary/treasurer of CBBA and granddaughter of Patterson, Ann Shaughnessy, has helped with the auction since its start and looks forward to it every year.

“We have had great luck with the auction,” Shaughnessy said. “People enjoy the items that are brought, and it gives everyone a focal point to come together to enjoy each other’s company.”

An event that happened for the first time at the 40th CBBA Sale was the CBBA All Star Spectacular Show. This show invited all juniors from across the U.S. as a kickoff for the All American show. The All Star Spectacular was the Thursday before the sale with the junior bull, showmanship, and F-1 show and continued on Friday with the junior female show. This event allowed for more youth to get involved with the sale and create a larger awareness for CBBA.

This sale means more than just looking for new bloodlines to add to their herd for a lot of the ranchers and breeders attending the event. It is a place where they can come together to continue the betterment of the Brahman breed through fellowship.

Philip Gilstrap, CBBA President and auctioneer of the sale, started attending the sale at just a few months old and has seen firsthand not only the improvement of the cattle that are brought to the sale but also how the sale brings people together.

“A group of consignors brings the very best they have to offer from their ranch and are excited to come spend the weekend in a family atmosphere with old friends while meeting new friends,” Gilstrap said.

This year, the CBBA event will take place on June 6. To learn more about how to get involved with the sale or how to enter the junior shows, you can contact Philip Gilstrap at 864-506-0463.

*Reprinted from the May 2020 issue of The Brahman Journal –
Updated for 2026*

2026 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES SCHEDULE

Most of the breed associations in North and South Carolina have stepped forward and renewed their contracts for Spotlight sections in *The Carolina Cattle Connection* for 2026. If your breed is not featured as a Spotlight section and you would like to inquire on any open months please feel free to contact me. Below is the tentative schedule for the upcoming year.

2026 RESERVED SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

JANUARY	CHAROLAIS
FEBRUARY	FORAGES
MARCH	ANGUS
APRIL	PIEDMONTESE
MAY	BRAHMAN
JUNE	HEREFORD
JULY	BELTED GALLOWAY
AUGUST	SIMMENTAL
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OCTOBER	WAGYU
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SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

Can Do Attitude Breeds Success at Morrison Farm

By JANEN JONES BENSON

When Myra Neal Morrison arrived at Morrison Farm, her mother thought it was for a two week visit. That was 51 years ago.

“She didn’t want me to do it,” Morrison recalls, adding that some people didn’t think she could do it. When she was a teenager, the uncle who managed the farm for her father died; Morrison asked to run it. By 1965, she was doing just that.

Today, she runs a purebred herd of Brahman and Simmental, along with F-1 (Simmental/Brahman cross) steers raised for freezer beef, on 1,050 acres on the Rowan and Cabarrus county lines.

“Unlike a lot of farmers, I row crop, run purebred cattle, and feed out my cattle using my own grain,” Morrison said. “I’m just different; I’ve got it all.”

“I feed corn silage five months of the year, starting in January,” she said.

“The silo holds 650 tons.” She has 150 acres of corn planted each year using her John Deere eight row planter. She brings in help for

spraying, fertilizing, cutting, and combining, although she maintains her own equipment.

“This saves on costs and gets it cut in two or three days,” she added.

The farm also produces barley, hay, and soybeans.

The herd is fed daily at a feedlot, where they circle by in groups of 50 before returning to 30 acre pastures. They have free choice access to high magnesium minerals and synthetic protein on the feedlot.

When there is plenty of rainfall in North Carolina, hay is so abundant that Morrison puts bales out on the pasture. But, during years of drought, she has to revise her water resources.

“Until the summer of 2002, I was using a creek and just had one well,” she said. “Then I got worried and added another well.” Both wells use electric pumps, and most herds have automatic waterers available at all times.

Morrison’s certified and accredited herd is tested for brucellosis and TB annually. Vaccinations and worming are done at the same time.

“Nobody quite understands why I don’t need to do it (worming) twice, but I don’t,” Morrison said.

“A lot is the condition of the cattle and small pastures, and when I worm at test time in June, it cleans all the pastures out.” She uses Ivomec and Eprinex from Merck.

Morrison breeds year round, using her three bulls, which she prefers, as well as artificial insemination. Maintaining her own tank, she purchases semen from ABS, Select Sires, and at sales.

“(With these sources) you don’t often get anything you don’t want,” she said.

“I breed these cows to the best bulls in the A.I. books. For the Brahman, I try to get the best semen I can afford. Generally, I buy at sales where I know the people and can get them to sign the certificate.”

“With the Simmental cattle, the traits are all there. They’ve got good disposition, good feet, good backs; it’s all there,” Morrison said.

“With the newer Simmental, the solid reds and solid blacks, the disposition kind of got knocked out. I prefer the red and whites. I look for good growth, not excellent birth weight. But my halfbloods



can be 120–130 pounds at birth. The Simmental run 80–100 pounds and the Brahman 70–85, and here I get these 130 pound calves due to crossbreeding. “A disadvantage of the halfbloods is their disposition,” Morrison said.

“They will eat you for breakfast,” she said, adding that they’re not wanted at stockyards.

But she solved that problem, finding that she can feed them out in 15 months and sell them herself.

“They grow out better than purebreds, dress out better than purebreds, and take a third less feed than purebreds. Weather doesn’t matter; they’re tough cattle. I dress 62-64 percent on average.”

Calling the freezer beef market “just crazy,” she sells to anyone and prices on hock hanging weights.

Morrison feeds out on her own farm and sells bulls at 1,100–1,200 pounds to get full price. Simmental are sold around 18 months of age.

“I don’t sell Brahmans to anyone until they’re two years old,” she said, explaining that they grow until the age of five and that females shouldn’t go in heat until they’re two.

Bulls not sold for herds go to stockyards, where they’re primarily used for red meat and hamburger.

Morrison began computer based record keeping in 1987. She has used Microsoft Excel and Access databases she developed herself to track complete herd records, including vaccinations, breeding, and tag numbers.

She has been on the board of the N.C. Simmental Association and the Carolinas Brahman Breeders Association, and is one of the few Easterners to have served on the American Brahman Breeders Association Board.

“It’s rare for Easterners to run, since the meetings are out west,” she said.



“My attitude is why I made it in the cattle business,” Morrison said.

“So much depends on weather, luck, a hundred things. To realize you’ve done what you set out to do for more than 50 years and don’t regret it, that’s as happy a thing as you can have, I guess.”

For more information, contact the N.C. Simmental Association at 336-468-1679 or www.ncsimmental.com. The American Brahman Breeders Association may be reached at 713-349-0854 or www.brahman.org.

*Reprinted with permission from The Farm Chronicles,
December 8, 2003; Updated for April 2026*



SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

Brahman's Standard of Excellence

A BBA and its members believe in setting high excellence standards for the American Brahman breed. American Brahman cattle are evaluated on a rigorous set of excellence standards — from structure to temperament.

I. General Appearance (22 points)

a) Size and Weight (10 points) – Must be well developed according to age. Bulls should be 1,600-2,200 lbs — cows 1,000-1,400 lbs — at maturity in good flesh. Body frame should have ample depth, width, and length regardless of condition.

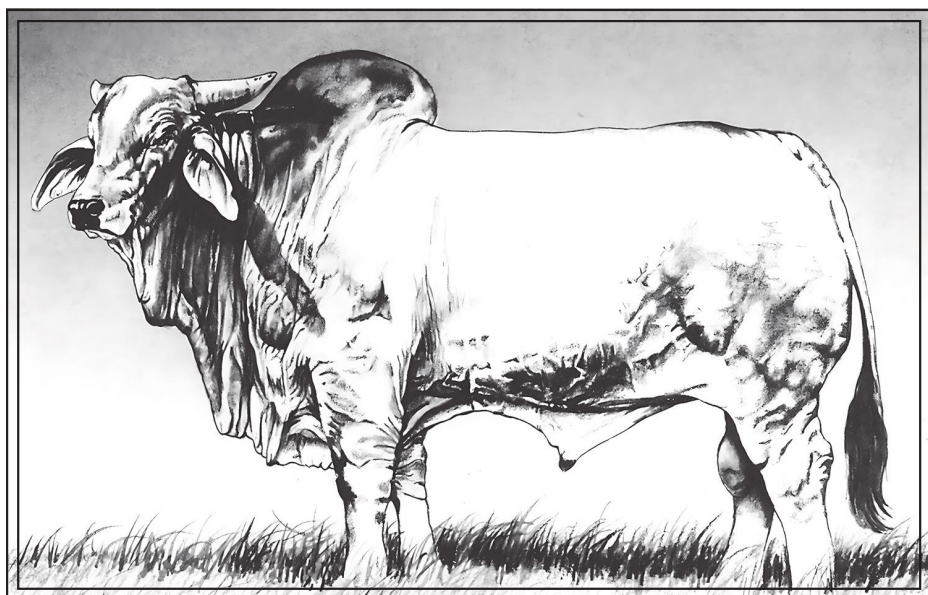
b) Form (8 points) – Have massive, long, broad, moderate depth, balanced, straight back with a slightly rounding rump. Any appreciable dropping off from hips to region of crops or hump is undesirable. The bottom line should be straight, except for the sheath in bulls and navel in cows.

c) Quality (4 points) – Hide should be soft and pliable, of medium thickness, and hair of medium texture, soft. Bone should be ample in substance, clean cut and strong. Muscling should be long and well defined.

II. Body Form or Conformation

(55 points for male/56 points for female)

a) Shoulders and Chest (8 points) – Should be moderately oblique, smooth, broad on top, and covered by the hump. The brisket must not be prominent. The chest should be wide and deep with good width on the floor.



b) Body (17 points)

1. Back and Ribs (9 points) – Ribs should be well sprung from the backbone, arched, with ample length to give moderate depth to body and symmetrically joined to the loin and crops. Excessive depression behind shoulders is objectionable. A short middle and excessive depth of rib is not desirable. The back and loin must be uniformly wide and gently sloping to the sides when viewed from the rear. Should be well covered with thick, natural muscling. A sharp angle of back between and extending above the hooks is objectionable.

2. Loin (8 points) – Should be broad, thick, level, and firm, blending smoothly into the back and rump.

c) Hindquarters (16 points)

1. Rump (8 points) – Should be long, wide at the pins, and slightly rounding toward the tailhead. Should be smoothly joined to the loin with a smooth tailhead. A steep slope warrants serious discrimination.

2. Hooks (1 point for females only) – Should be lightly below level of the back, medium in width, and well laid in.

3. Round (8 points) – Should be broad, thick, full, and deep, extending well down to the hock.

d) Feet and Legs (7 points) – Should be of moderate length,

straight, and squarely placed, with bone of ample substance, strong and clean, tapering into well formed, dense joints. Hind legs should be perpendicular when viewed from the rear, but slightly inclined forward below the hocks and muscular above the hocks. Should have strong, moderately sloping pasterns. Toes should be uniform, ample in size, and straight heel deep. Must walk straight, strong, and active.

e) Muscling (7 points) – The animal should show indications of superior muscling, with front legs set wide, shoulders thick, and well muscled forearm and stifle. Should show rounding over top. Rounds should be thick and full, with the widest point halfway between the rump and hock when viewed from the rear. The animal should stand square and walk with hind legs set well apart while traveling true. Should have good length from hook to hock and from pin to stifle, with relatively heavy bone.

**III. Breed and Sex Characteristics
(17 points for male/16 points for female)**

a) Color – Grey or red of varying shades must predominate. Brindle, grulla, and true white (albino) are disqualifications. The muzzle, hoofs, and switch must be black and the horns dark.

b) Head (4 points) – Sex should be expressed by the head, with bulls being masculine and females being feminine. The face should be moderate in length, with a full muzzle, nostrils wide and open, and lips dark. The eyes should be mild and full, with good width between them. Horns must be set wide at the base, thick, and of medium length. The horns of cows should be thinner than those of bulls.

c) Neck and Throat (2 points) – The neck should be moderately short and muscular in bulls — neat in cows — blending smoothly into the shoulders. The throat should be clean on the sides but with moderate development of the dewlap.

d) Hump (2 points) – Bulls should possess a hump of ample size, located directly on top of the shoulders, moderate in thickness, somewhat resembling a bean in shape, and extending backwards. Females should show a hump of moderate development, more oval in shape, and located on top of the shoulders.

e) Sheath and Navel (3 points for male/2 points for female) – The sheath should be of medium size and closely attached, not pendulous. Excessive development of the sheath or navel is objectionable.

f) Tail (3 points) – Should be set above the pins and neatly attached to the body, level with the top line or slightly below, and moderately long.

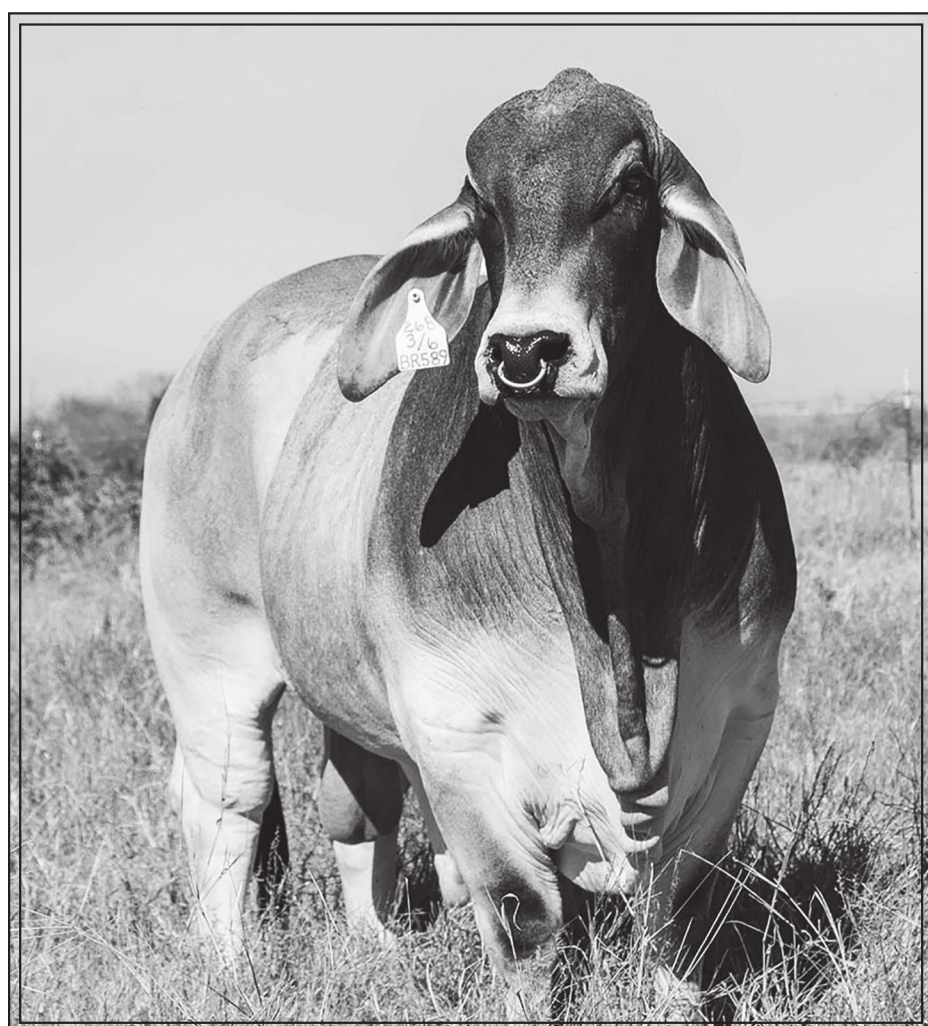
g) Sex Character (4 points) – Bulls should possess pronounced masculinity. The scrotum should contain two testicles, well developed, and of equal size. Abnormal testicles warrant serious discrimination. Females should show characteristics of refinement and femininity. Udders should be ample in capacity, extending well forward in line with the belly and well up behind; not fleshy. Teats should be moderate in size and squarely placed under each quarter.

h) Environment Adaptation Traits (2 points) – Hide should be densely covered with hair of medium texture, oily to the touch, and capable of movement along the sides. Dewlap should be well developed with soft, pliable skin arranged in folds extending from the lower jaw to the chest floor. There should be moderate development of loose skin under the belly.

IV. Temperament (6 points)

Should be alert, but docile.

TOTAL POINTS – 100



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SPOTLIGHT on BRAHMAN

Advantages of Registering F1 Females

The Premier Commercial Female Program – Since its establishment in 1979, the ABBA F1 Certification Program has become the leading commercial female registration program in the U.S., with over 85,000 females registered. This program offers commercial producers a proven method to enhance herd performance and profitability, with Golden Certified and Certified F1 females averaging \$200 more per head than other breed crosses.

F1 Certification Options

- Golden Certified F1 – Progeny of two registered parents.
- Certified F1 – Sired by a registered bull and out of a qualified purebred, non-registered cow inspected by an ABBA representative.

Producers can achieve a Brahman influenced F1 hybrid by breeding registered Brahman bulls to qualified non-registered cows of other breeds or by crossing registered bulls of other breeds with registered or qualified Brahman cows. This flexibility ensures a 50/50 Brahman-Bos *Taurus* hybrid, known for superior adaptability, longevity, and performance.

Program Benefits

By enrolling in the ABBA F1 Certification Program, producers gain access to:

- *Higher Market Value* – Certified F1 females command premium prices.
- *Industry Recognition* – Official certification increases credibility.
- *Marketing & Promotion* – Inclusion in ABBA membership mailings, website listings, and updates on breed progress.
- *Premium Sales Opportunities* – Eligibility for special incentives and participation in the National F1 Sale.

ABBA members must be enrolled in the F-1 Program to take advantage of these benefits.

F1 Plus Certification – Added Value for Offspring

To further enhance Golden Certified/Certified F1 Females, ABBA offers the F1 Plus Program. This verifies the parentage of their offspring when bred to a registered beef bull.

- F1 Plus females receive a unique ear tag, signifying their superior genetic background and boosting their value.
- Enhances traceability and increases the worth of both the cow and her progeny.

Identification & Certification Options

Certificate Option Requires:

- Breeder's name, herd ID, and ownership brand
- Parentage details (sire and dam breed, registration info if applicable)
- Birth record and color markings
- Fee - \$7.50 per certification
- ABBA issues official certificates and maintains records for accuracy and integrity.

Eartag Option Requires:

- Breeder's membership details
- Sire and dam breed information
- Number of certifications requested.

Program Fees

- One time enrollment fee - \$50
- Annual administrative fee - \$20
- Certified F1 Certificate or Eartag - 7.50 each
- Qualification inspections (for purebred non-registered herds) - \$6 per head

Transferring F1 Females

To accommodate the growing interest in showing Golden Certified and Certified F1 Females, ABBA allows formal ownership transfers.

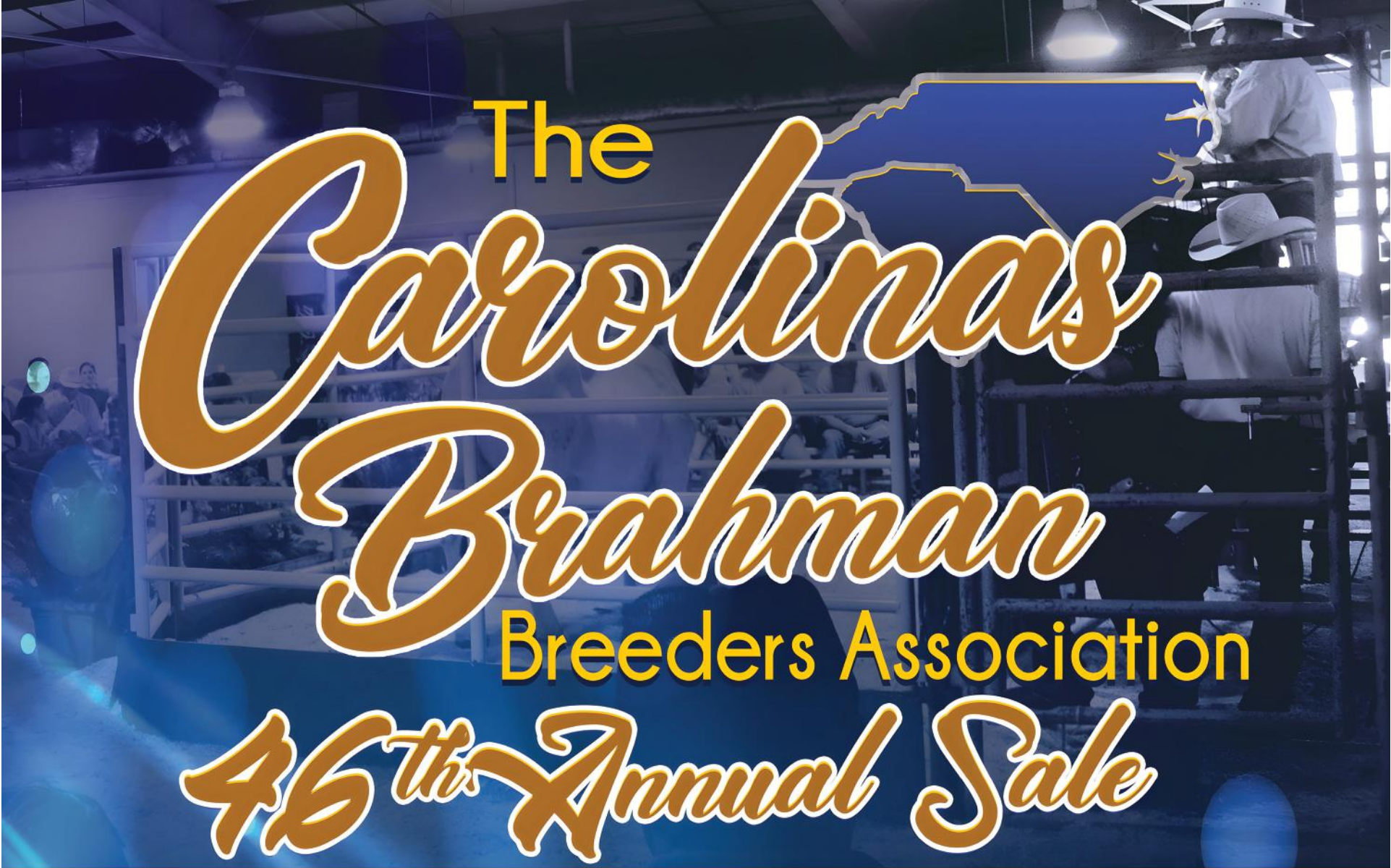
- Transfer Fee - \$17.50 within 30 days of delivery/\$20 after 30 days
- Show certified females must provide an exact birthdate and optional name or ID number.

Why Register Your F1 Females?

Enrolling in the ABBA F-1 Certification Program provides:

- Higher market demand and sale prices
- Verified quality and genetic consistency
- Stronger marketing and sales opportunities
- Access to ABBA programs and member benefits

This proven program gives producers the tools to maximize profitability while ensuring genetic integrity and breed excellence.



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2026 ABBA Annual Membership Meeting. The ABBA proudly held its Annual Membership Meeting in conjunction with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, continuing a long standing tradition that brings together members, breeders, and industry leaders from across the U.S. and around the globe.

The week of the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo remains one of the most active and meaningful times for the Brahman breed. With a full schedule of events — including the International Brahman Show, ABBA International Sale, committee meetings, and numerous opportunities for member engagement — the Annual Meeting serves as a cornerstone moment to reflect on progress, share updates, and set direction for the future.

During the meeting, reports were presented from ABBA's standing committees, highlighting the work accomplished over the past year and outlining initiatives that are underway. These updates reflect the continued dedication of leadership and committee members in advancing the mission of ABBA across its Five Pillars — Purebred Foundation, Commercial Sector Development, International Outreach, Youth Development, and Research, Development, and Breed Improvement.

Global Collaboration Takes Center Stage at World Brahman Federation Meeting. *International leaders gather in Houston to strengthen partnerships and advance the Brahman breed worldwide.* During the week of activities at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, the ABBA was honored to facilitate a meeting of the World Brahman Federation (WBF), bringing together approximately 35 attendees representing a truly global network of Brahman breeders and organizations.

Countries represented included the U.S., Panama, Mexico, Paraguay, Germany, Guatemala, Ecuador, and several others — highlighting the international reach and influence of the Brahman breed.

The meeting was facilitated by Paul Maulsby and Iridiana Ibarra of the ABBA office and focused on the current dynamics, opportunities, and future direction of the World Brahman Federation. Meaningful discussion centered around strengthening collaboration among member associations and advancing the breed on a global scale.

Featured presentations included an update from the Panama Brahman Association, with participation from Panamanian officials, as well as a presentation from the Mexico Brahman Association outlining plans for the upcoming World Brahman Congress to be held in Mexico.

The overall tone of the meeting was positive and forward looking, with strong encouragement surrounding the continued growth and relevance of the Federation.

ABBA appreciates the engagement and partnership of our international colleagues and looks forward to continued collaboration with our global partners in promoting and advancing the Brahman breed worldwide.

The Show Is Coming to Town — 2026 AJBA All American Under the Big Top in Bryan, Texas. One of the true highlights of the AJBA each year is the All American — an event built on a rich history and tradition that has grown into a premier leadership development platform for our junior members.

The 2026 AJBA All American will take place on June 30–July 5 at the Brazos Expo Center in Bryan, Tex., and promises to once again bring together juniors from across the country for a week of competition, growth, and connection.

While exhibiting a champion at the All American is a meaningful goal and a tremendous accomplishment — an honor for those who

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achieve it — participants quickly realize there is much more to the overall experience. It's about developing leadership skills, building lifelong relationships, and creating connections that often carry forward into future careers and opportunities.

As the event continues to evolve, we are encouraged by the growth of programs with a more commercial focus, such as the Better Beef Contest, which continues to gain participation and add another valuable dimension to the All American.

The All American is more than a show — it's an opportunity for juniors to grow, lead, and represent the future of the Brahman breed. I encourage each of you to seize every moment, participate in as many events as possible, and challenge yourself to build new relationships while strengthening existing ones.

A BBA Announces Kendahl Nix as Director of Registrations, Memberships, and Transfers. The ABBA is pleased to announce the hiring of Kendahl Nix as the new Director of Registrations, Memberships, and Transfers, effective April 6.

Nix joins the ABBA team with a strong foundation in the agricultural industry and a demonstrated passion for beef cattle. A recent graduate of Texas A&M University, she has already begun her role with energy and enthusiasm, quickly immersing herself in the day-to-day operations of the association.

"Kendahl has hit the ground running," said Paul Maulsby. "Her work ethic, attention to detail, and prior experience position her to be a tremendous asset to our members and to the continued advancement of the Brahman breed."

Nix brings valuable experience through multiple internships and leadership opportunities across the livestock industry. Most recently, she served as an event management intern for the International Junior Brangus Breeders Association, where she assisted in coordinating junior cattle shows and conferences. This role strengthened her organizational skills and ability to work closely

with members, exhibitors, and volunteers.

Her experience also includes internships with major livestock events such as the State Fair of Texas, the San Antonio Livestock Show & Rodeo, and Rodeo Austin, where she gained hands-on experience in livestock management, event logistics, and large scale show operations. These opportunities allowed her to collaborate with industry leaders while developing a strong understanding of the operational standards required at premier agricultural events.

In addition, Nix was actively involved in the Texas A&M Livestock Judging Team and various student agricultural organizations, further reflecting her commitment to leadership, education, and advocacy within the livestock industry.

"I am eager for the opportunity to support the growth and success of ABBA members while further advancing the mission of the association," said Nix. "These experiences have shaped my passion for the industry and for youth programs, and I look forward to contributing to the continued success of ABBA."

In her role, Nix will oversee the critical functions of registrations, memberships, and transfers — ensuring accuracy, efficiency, and service excellence for ABBA members both domestically and internationally.

The ABBA remains committed to strengthening its operations, supporting its membership, and advancing the Brahman breed through leadership, innovation, and service.

About the American Brahman Breeders Association. *The American Brahman Breeders Association is the world registry for Brahman cattle, the #1 beef breed for efficiency, hybrid vigor, and environmental adaptability. ABBA provides an array of member services, educational opportunities, and a wide array of programs to assist the profitability of its members. For more information about the American Brahman breed or the many opportunities offered by the ABBA, visit www.brahman.org.*



ABBA

Executive Vice President Update

By PAUL MAULSBY, *American Brahman Breeders Association*



Dear Members of the American Brahman Breeders Association,

Leading with a Purpose in a Strong Start to 2026

It is hard to believe that we have already reached the end of the first quarter of 2026. Time has a way of moving quickly in our business, and this past quarter has been nothing short of productive, encouraging, and energizing for the American Brahman Breeders Association.

We recently concluded a successful Annual Membership Meeting and an outstanding week at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo — one of the most important gatherings for our breed each year. It is always a privilege to see our members, visit with breeders, and welcome guests from across the U.S. and around the globe. That level of engagement continues to reinforce the global reach and relevance of the Brahman breed.

From a market standpoint, we are witnessing historic conditions. Demand for Brahman influenced cattle — particularly F1 females — has always been a strength of our breed, but what we are seeing today is truly exceptional. These trends are a direct reflection of the value Brahman genetics bring to the commercial sector, especially in regions where adaptability, efficiency, and longevity are essential.

As we move forward, our focus remains centered on the five pillars that guide the direction of ABBA — strengthening our purebred foundation, expanding commercial opportunities, enhancing international outreach, investing in youth development, and advancing research, data, and breed improvement. These pillars are not just concepts — they are the framework through which we serve our membership and position the breed for long term success.

Looking ahead, one of my priorities over the coming year is to continue telling the story of the Brahman breed's impact in crossbreeding systems. The compatibility and connectivity of Brahman genetics with so many other breeds is a strength that positions us uniquely within the industry. As we think about the future, there are opportunities to explore new ways of measuring and communicating that value — whether through the development of a global index or an F1 focused index that better captures and defines the role Brahman cattle play in commercial programs.

Equally important is our continued investment in the next generation. As we evaluate opportunities within the American Junior Brahman Association, we must ask how we can expand and evolve our programming. This may include developing additional

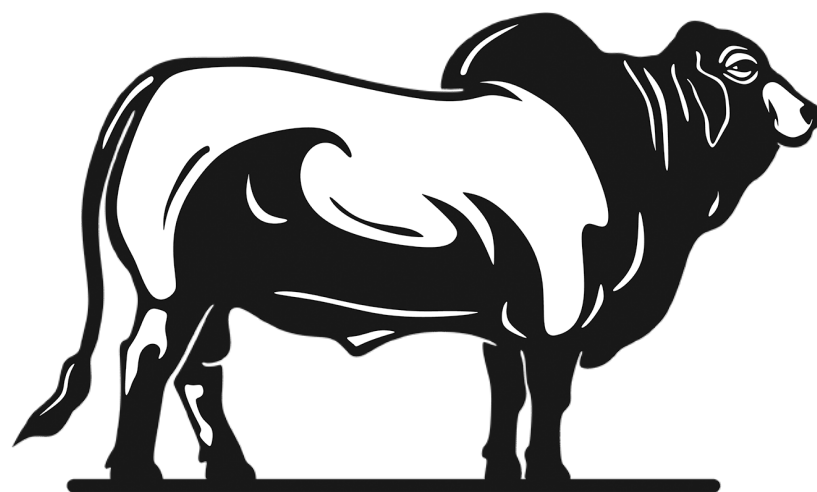
events centered around the commercial sector, as well as creating meaningful opportunities for young people transitioning from junior involvement into the next phase of their careers within the industry. Supporting that transition is critical to maintaining engagement and strengthening the future leadership of our breed.

In addition, we will continue to build and strengthen ABBA's footprint on the global stage. This includes reinforcing our relationships with established international partners while also developing new connections in emerging markets that are increasingly selecting American Brahman genetics. As these countries grow and formalize their own associations, ABBA has an opportunity — and a responsibility — to serve as a resource by providing education, data, and guidance to support their development and long term success.

There are many new initiatives on the horizon as we continue to build on this momentum. From advancements in DNA and performance programs to increased engagement both domestically and internationally, we are committed to ensuring that ABBA remains progressive, relevant, and member focused.

As we look ahead to the remainder of 2026, I encourage each of you to stay engaged, take pride in the role you play within this association, and continue to represent the Brahman breed with integrity and purpose.

The opportunities in front of us are significant, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to move this breed and this association forward.



BRAHMAN

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ASHLEY'S

❖ BEEF CORNER ❖

Beef Quality Assurance Training

By **ASHLEY HERRING**, *N.C. Cattlemen's Beef Council*



The Butner Beef Cattle Field Laboratory recently hosted a comprehensive Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training, bringing together research station staff for certification and hands-on education focused on best management practices in cattle care and production. The training was led by Dr. Mark Alley of Merck and Kim Woods of N.C. Cooperative Extension, both of whom brought a wealth of experience and practical insight to the program.

Designed to ensure that all staff from across the state are aligned with industry standards, the training covered key principles of the BQA program, including proper injection techniques, animal handling, recordkeeping, and overall herd health management. Emphasis was placed on the critical role that BQA plays in maintaining consumer confidence, improving animal welfare, and protecting the integrity of the beef supply chain.

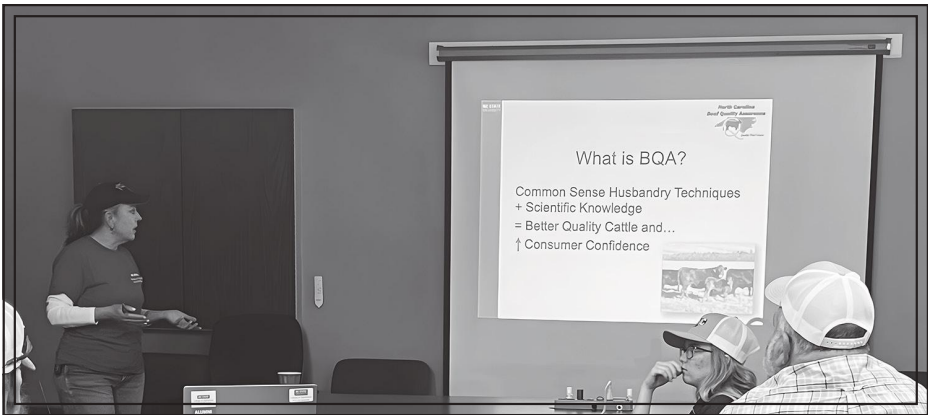


Dr. Alley provided in-depth instruction on cattle health protocols and the importance of accurate diagnosis and treatment practices. His discussion highlighted how thoughtful, science based decision making at the research level translates directly to improved outcomes for producers across the state. The group also saw a strong focus on practical application, walking participants through chute side techniques and reinforcing low stress cattle handling methods that enhance both safety and efficiency.

Kim complemented these topics with a BQA presentation and test for participants.

One of the most valuable components of the training was the opportunity for hands-on learning. Staff engaged in demonstrations

that reinforced proper injection site selection, needle use, and vaccine handling — key factors in preventing carcass defects and ensuring beef quality. These interactive elements allowed participants to apply what they learned in real time, building confidence in their ability to implement BQA standards in their daily work.



By certifying all North Carolina research station staff, the Butner facility is reinforcing its commitment to excellence in cattle management and research integrity. As a hub for innovation and education, the station plays a vital role in setting the standard for best practices that benefit producers statewide. Ensuring that every team member is BQA certified strengthens the station's ability to conduct high quality research while modeling responsible stewardship of livestock.

This training also underscores the continued partnership between N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. State University, and the state's beef industry. Through collaborative efforts like this,



extension professionals and research institutions work hand-in-hand to equip producers and industry leaders with the tools and knowledge needed to advance the industry.

As consumer expectations continue to evolve, programs like BQA remain essential in demonstrating the beef industry's commitment to transparency, animal care, and product quality. The successful training at Butner serves as a strong example of how education and certification can drive progress and uphold the values that define North Carolina's cattle community.

A special thank you goes to Greg Shaeffer for hosting the group and April Shaeffer for organizing the training.



COWBOYS FOR CHRIST



THE CHAPLAIN'S CORRAL

The Mystery Mare

By PHYLLIS GODWIN, *Cowboys for Christ Chaplain*

Several years ago, I was among a group of people who shared web photos of horses that went to a specific sale barn in hopes of generating interest in them. I'd been thinking about producing my own breeding stallion at the time — you might say that it was a 'desire of my heart.' This reminded me of *Psalm 37:4* — "*Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.*"

While sharing those horse photos, I ran across the photo of an unidentified mare at the sales. She was underweight and stocked up — stagnation edema. Her eyes looked as if she were imploring someone to help, but even the horse rescues appeared uninterested. Her future looked rather bleak. I couldn't forget that mare. The sale barn wouldn't disclose any information on her. I prayed for guidance.

Identifying this mare seemed like an impossible task. Equipped with only her markings, I began a search to discover who this mare might be. It was possible that she was a mare who had earned six figures and had an amazing pedigree. The tag on the mare was \$250, most likely what she would have sold to a processor. She was up north, and I purchased her having only seen her in a photo. I had either purchased an emaciated, grade — unrideable, injured \$250 mare or an amazing \$250 find. What I needed was confirmation on who she was and registration papers.

I found the names of a couple who might have been her last owners. They had no website, only a barn name, address, and phone number that no one answered. I mailed a copy of the photo, along with a letter, to the address on the web — "Was this your mare? Do you have her registration papers? I bought her, and she is safe." Weeks went by without a reply.

Meanwhile, the wife was living in another part of the country. She decided to travel to the farm in Pennsylvania where I'd mailed my letter. She found it discarded and unopened by her husband. Let me say this again — she felt compelled to travel across the country to their Pennsylvania farm. Little did she know that she was being sent there to find and open my letter. She replied in a return letter that yes, the mare had been theirs; she had indeed earned six figures; and yes, she would provide her registration papers.

Even when we think that things look humanly impossible — God is working supernaturally to change our difficulties into triumphs. When we reach victory through Him, we have a testimony that we can share with others. As we're told in *Romans 8:28* — "*And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.*"

Notice that the Bible is clear about who God speaks of regarding his blessings — those who delight in Him (*Psalm 37:4*) and those who love Him (*Romans 8:28*). It may feel at times like our prayers are going unanswered and that we are dealing with impossible situations — meeting mortgage payments, keeping farm equipment running, livestock prices, as well as family and health problems. We may grow weary, overwhelmed, and sometimes suffer burnout, but Almighty God never does. As we are told in *Psalm 121:4* — "*Behold He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*" Like a loving father, He never tires of quietly working to turn our difficulties into triumphs.

Now, what about that unidentified, slaughter bound, emaciated, stocked up mare? She produced four registered offspring — two fillies and two colts. One of her colts became my stallion, and all four of her foals were winners.

❖

AMAZING GRAZING

❖

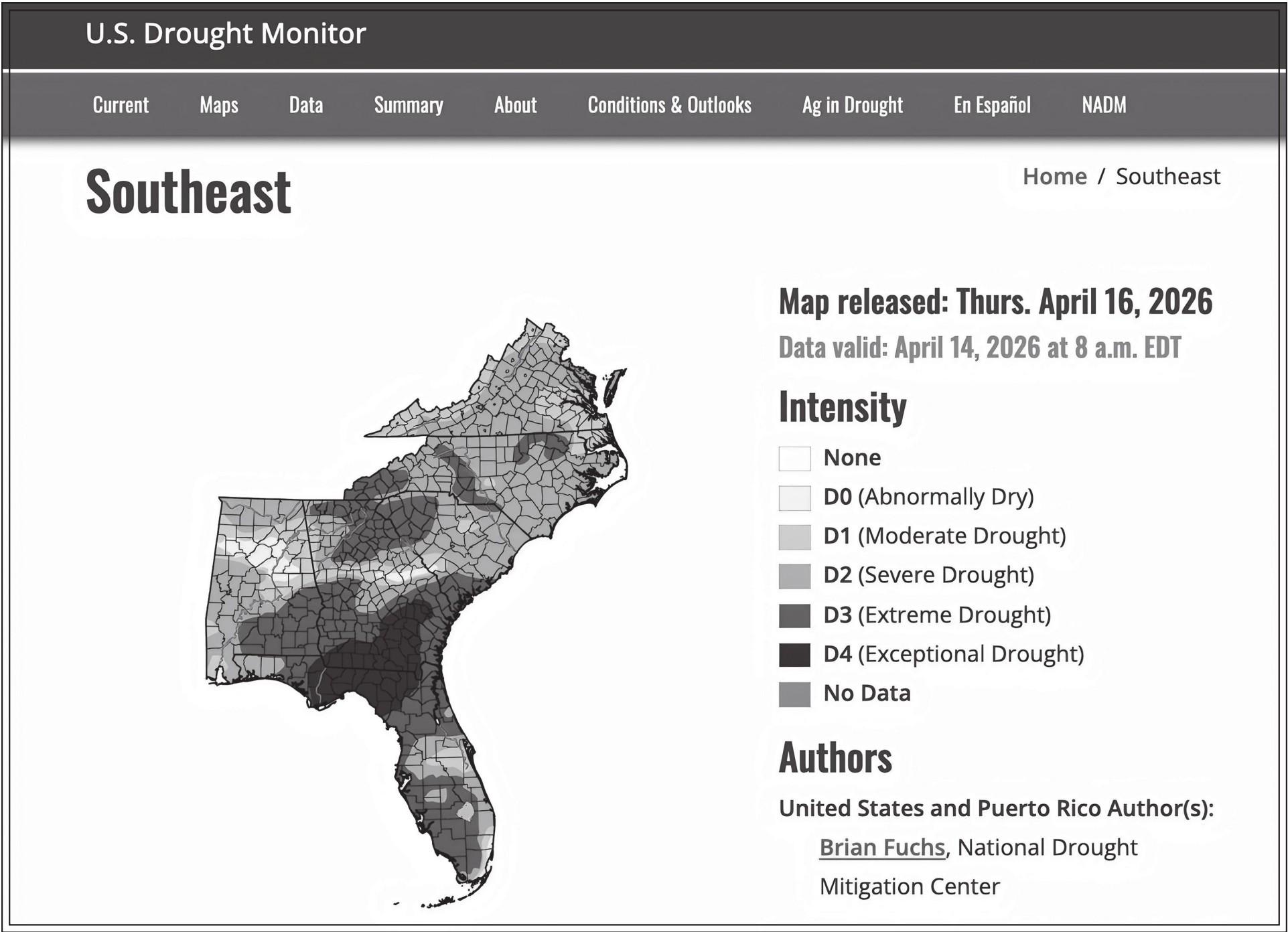
General Thoughts About
Drought Management

By DR. MATT POORE, N.C. State University



I am hesitant to write about this topic so early in the year, but as we sit in mid-April, the entire state is in drought. The Drought Monitor is a great resource you can access on the web that is updated weekly. The current map shows most of the state in Severe Drought (D2), while there are areas of Extreme Drought (D3). These ratings are worth studying because

the Livestock Forage Program, which will help livestock farmers in drought, is linked to these ratings. I don't have a memory of it being this dry with as little spring forage production as I am seeing today approaching mid-April. Because it is so critically dry, I am writing this story instead of



what I had originally planned — *Managing Heat Stress*. I will save that one for next month. Hopefully it will be wet by that time. As it stands, there is no rain in our forecast, but rather record heat with wind.

As we approach what could develop into a very difficult situation, there are several things you need to be thinking about. First, the worst thing you can do in a drought is to overgraze your pastures. Once pastures are grazed to about a 3–4 inch height, the cattle should be put in a sacrifice area and fed hay. Rotating around the farm until all the pastures are at this stop grazing height and then pulling in will save the stand so it can recover quickly when it does rain.

Next, stocking rate is a critical factor. If you are heavily stocked relative to your carrying capacity, then you will run out of grass soon after the dry spell starts, and it will take a long time for the pastures to catch back up after it does rain. Moderating stocking rate is a critical aspect of drought management, and you should be making a list of what cows you would sell as your feed availability

gets tighter. Pregnancy testing and selling open cows is the first step, followed by considerations of temperament, productivity, and potential longevity. This is discussed in detail in the companion article. Weaning time is also approaching, so weaning the calves and getting them sold — if that is your goal — will also help reduce your feed demand.

Finally, hay will be short this year due to a very poor first cutting, so making a feed plan will be critical. Unfortunately, if we do have to feed, we will be feeding hay that is really needed for next winter's feed budget. Think about the long term and make plans to make or source a lot of hay.

I am at heart an optimistic realist. I hope we are not in for another big drought, but I know eventually one will come. The long term forecast still calls for a wetter summer and fall, so at least we have that to look forward to. In the meantime, thinking about your drought management plan will help you in the future even if it does rain soon.

Axiota NEWS

Axiota Animal Health Names Wamego, Kan., as Global Headquarters. *Move strengthens the KC Animal Health Corridor as a hub for animal health excellence.* Global leader in cattle health solutions Axiota Animal Health recently announced today it will name its facility in Wamego, Kan., as the company's global headquarters.

The announcement formalizes the longstanding presence of Axiota Animal Health in Wamego, where the company operates manufacturing, research and development, and scientific operations for its products used by cattle producers in more than 30 countries worldwide.

"Wamego has long been a cornerstone of Axiota's manufacturing and research, so designating it as our global headquarters is a natural next step," said William (Bill) Weldon, CEO, Axiota Animal Health. "From here, we're developing and producing technologies that help cattle producers around the world improve herd health and productivity. Leveraging our location within the KC Animal Health Corridor and our longstanding relationship with Kansas State University allows us to drive innovation and attract the top talent the industry demands."

Located near Kansas State University, the facility benefits from proximity to one of the nation's leading veterinary and

animal health research institutions. That connection helps Axiota attract specialized scientific talent and collaborate with researchers advancing the future of livestock health.

From its Wamego facility, Axiota supports cattle producers worldwide in improving herd health and performance through prevention based, non-antibiotic solutions. This includes:

- Lactipro — the only rumen native probiotic that delivers Mega e — proven to promote rumen health and performance.
- Multimin 90 — a zinc, copper, manganese, and selenium injection — is the only FDA approved injectable supplement that delivers four trace minerals known to support cattle health and reproduction.

The decision highlights the global impact of the KC Animal Health Corridor, a hub stretching from Manhattan, Kan., to Columbia, Mo., with Kansas City at its heart. The region, home to the world's largest concentration of animal health assets, serves as a leading center for life science research, development, and collaboration.

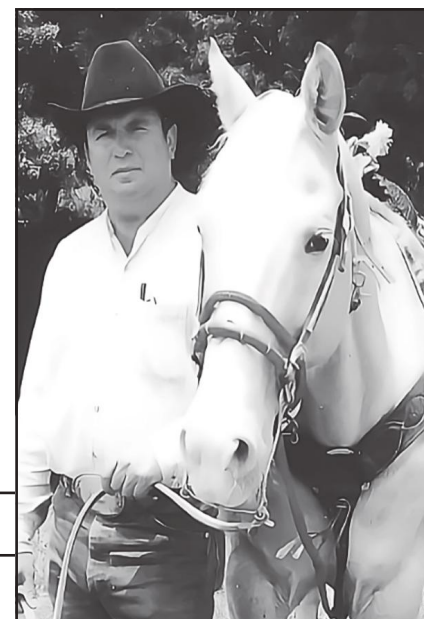
"Axiota's decision to locate its global headquarters in Wamego reflects the industry leadership that continues to define the Corridor," said Kimberly Young, president of the KC Animal Health Corridor. "Companies here aren't just participating in the industry — they're driving the science, technology, and production that support animal health and food security around the world."

About Axiota Animal Health. *Axiota is an innovation-driven company that discovers, develops, and markets products for beef and dairy producers around the world. Axiota's non-antibiotic solutions prepare cattle to thrive during transition and stress and support producers' goals of optimal health, performance, and animal well being. For more information, visit axiota.com.*

❖ E.B.'s VIEW FROM THE COW PASTURE ❖

An Iron Safe

By E.B. HARRIS, Warrenton, N.C.



I was working on the farm equipment auction for Smith Creek Angus, owned by Marty and Lynne Rooker and Weldon Rooker. We sold the purebred Angus cattle for Marty and Lynne in February, and then they decided to have a dispersal of their farm equipment in March.

Marty and Weldon's mother and grandparents ran a store on the farm. Weldon told me there was a safe in the store that they would like to put on the sale. The safe stood about 4' tall and probably about 2½' wide and 2½' deep. It was heavy duty for sure.

I had not paid a lot of attention to it until we got it out of the store. When we got it out in the sunlight, I could see written on the top in faded letters "Medoc Vineyard Co. Inc." I said to myself, "Wow, that dates back to the 1800s." Medoc is in Halifax County — just east of Hollister and west of Enfield. I wondered how in the world a safe of that era got in the northern part of Warren County — probably 45 miles away.

I asked Weldon to tell me about the safe. He said, "In about 1963 or 1964, when I was a tyke, Clayton Mitchell, who ran a garage in Norlina, brought the safe out to the farm with his wrecker. He had to have sandbags on the front of the wrecker to hold it down on the road when he was bringing it to the farm."

I asked Weldon if he knew where Clayton had gotten the safe from. Weldon said he had no idea and did not know anything about it, but he did have the combination to the safe. I started doing a little curiosity searching just for my own knowing about the safe.

After I made a few phone calls to different people, I pretty much found out that a man named Boyd Mayfield had a dealership of DeSoto automobiles and Minneapolis Moline tractors in Norlina. This was the shop that Clayton Mitchell took over somewhere thereabouts the '50s. Clayton came to Warren County from Alabama to help build Kerr Dam and ended up in Norlina. He was one of the lead folks in dirt track racing. He could set up an automobile that walked the dog. He won a lot of races and was known as one of the top dirt track racers who then moved on to the pavement. He knew how to set a car to make it hug the turns. I knew Clayton, and he did some tune up work for me in the late '60s or early '70s. It made no difference to him how busy he was; if a child came to the shop and needed something done to their bicycle, he stopped what he was doing and fixed the child's bicycle.

Now back to the safe story. Evidently Mr. Mayfield had bought

it and got it to his dealership in Norlina. When Clayton bought the dealership, the safe went with it and stayed there for many years until Foote Rooker Sr. worked out a trade with him. That's when Clayton took the safe to the Rooker Farm.

That's the story I have figured out, but I still wonder how it got from Medco to Norlina, because it was a feat in itself to get that safe moved back in the days when just a horse and wagon were used.

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Total Number of Cattle Sold _____ x \$1.00/head = \$ _____

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Total Number of Cattle Sold _____ x \$1.00/head = \$ _____

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HERD MANAGEMENT

Enhancing Beef Productivity and Adaptability Through Strategic Selection

By DR. BENJAMIN RAJO, N.C. State University

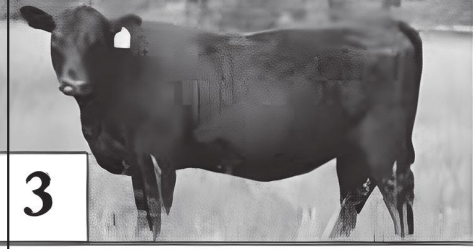
Over the past few years, the U.S. beef industry has faced a range of challenges, from a continued decline in the national cow herd size to extended droughts that have limited forage supplies and driven up feed costs. Simultaneously, strong consumer demand for beef, combined with tighter cattle inventories, has pushed prices to record highs across the market. Under these circumstances, producers across the nation are encouraged to emphasize improving productivity and efficiency, as well as planning for long term growth to support the profitability and sustainability of their operations.

For beef producers in the Southeast, selection and culling decisions that focus on specific traits and performance parameters can positively impact herd adaptability to the regional environment, leading to increased productivity. A large portion of this region is commonly referred to as “the Fescue Belt” due to the abundance of endophyte infected (E.I.) tall fescue pastures, which contain ergot alkaloids that expose grazing cattle to fescue toxicosis. Symptoms of this disease include decreased feed intake and growth rate, reduced reproductive performance, elevated respiration rate and body temperature, and reduced blood flow to the extremities. Retention of the winter hair coats is another negative effect, increasing susceptibility to heat stress during the summer months. Given these challenges, evaluating herd performance during specific periods of the year can help identify individuals who maintain better production indicators associated with tolerance to this environment.

As the spring progresses, environmental temperatures rise and day length increases. These seasonal changes stimulate cool season forages to break winter dormancy and begin their initial growth period. For E.I. fescue, this period not only represents its highest annual yield but also typically coincides with higher ergot alkaloid concentrations. These environmental changes also affect cattle physiology. Prolactin — the hormone responsible for regulating hair coat shedding — is influenced by day length. As days get longer, prolactin secretion should also increase. However, cattle exposed to fescue toxicosis commonly show lower prolactin concentrations, which impairs their ability to shed their thick winter hair coat. As previously mentioned, this will increase their susceptibility to heat stress and decrease their grazing performance.

Therefore, this period can be conveniently used to collect valuable records that improve selection and culling decisions. At N.C. State University, researchers developed and promote a data driven approach called the Fescue Toxicosis Selection Method (FTSM) to classify animals as either tolerant or susceptible to fescue toxicosis. The FTSM focuses on monitoring changes in body condition scores and hair shedding scores in grazing cattle throughout the spring. During this period, susceptible cattle often show lower body condition



1		Slick, short summer coat 100% shed
2		Coat is mostly shed ~75% shed
3		Coat is halfway shed ~50% shed
4		Exhibits initial shedding ~25% shed
5		Full winter coat 0% shed
Figure 1. Hair shedding scoring system. Adapted from Durbin et al., 2020. Genetics Selection Evolution 52:63.		

scores, along with higher hair shedding scores, because they retain more of their winter hair coat. In contrast, tolerant animals stand out in the herd with greater weight gains and body condition scores and lower hair shedding scores compared to susceptible cows. Research has also shown that cows that begin shedding their winter hair coat earlier in the spring tend to wean heavier calves.

Other major advantages of using the FTSM are that cattle do not need to be restrained during evaluation, as the data can be collected while cattle are out on pasture. Additionally, both body condition and hair shedding are assessed visually and reported using numeric scales. The body condition scoring system uses a 1–9 scale. The extremes of this scale should be avoided, as scores of 1 or 2 represent thin, malnourished animals, whereas scores of 8 or 9 indicate obese animals that are very expensive to maintain. Ideally, all animals in the herd should maintain a body condition score between 5 and 7 throughout the production cycle. (See Dr. Matt Poore’s Body Condition Scoring column in the February 2026 issue of *The Carolina Cattle Connection* for more information). Hair shedding is evaluated using a 1–5 scale, where a score of 5 indicates an animal that retains its full winter hair coat with no evidence of shedding,

and a score of 1 represents an animal that has completely shed its winter coat and exhibits a short, slick hair coat. Generally, cattle shed from head to tail and from top to bottom, beginning around the neck and along the topline. Figure 1 provides additional details on the full scoring system.

Based on this information, producers are encouraged to record body condition and hair shedding scores for the entire herd in May. At this time, early shedding cattle should have a slick hair coat and will be easier to identify. Cows that do not begin shedding until the summer, as well as those that fail to shed at all, should be removed from the herd. For fall calving operations, this period also coincides with weaning. Because hair shedding is a moderately heritable trait, heifer calves from early shedding dams should be retained as replacement females, whereas heifer calves born from late- and non-shedding dams should be culled from the herd along with their mothers. Considering the reduction in beef cow slaughter and the surge in demand for lean beef observed so far this year, higher cull cow prices are expected, presenting a valuable opportunity for producers not only to improve the adaptability and productivity of their cow herd but also to generate greater returns from their cull animals.



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Clemson Corner

Protecting Your Herd — Managing Harmful Algal Blooms

By HEATHER NIX & CHRISTOPHER LeMASTER, *Clemson University*

As we move into the warmer months, ensuring cattle have access to fresh, clean water is a primary management concern. Many producers rely on surface water sources; however, this practice introduces risks, most notably Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), which can have rapid and fatal consequences for livestock.

What are Harmful Algal Blooms? HABs include rapid overgrowths of cyanobacteria — formerly called blue-green algae — in water bodies. Unlike true algae, cyanobacteria can produce toxins that are harmful to humans, pets, and livestock. These blooms may appear as a “spilled paint” scum, pea soup, grass clippings, or thick mats on the water surface and can vary in color from blue to bright green to brownish-red.

Effects on Cattle — Cyanobacteria can produce over 1,000 types of poisonous compounds, known as cyanotoxins, which are released when the cells die and rupture. Cyanotoxins can attack the skin, liver, cells, or nervous system and can produce symptoms within minutes, days, or months following exposure. Health impacts depend on specific cyanotoxin(s), concentration, route of exposure — ingestion, contact, etc. — and length of exposure. Symptoms can vary widely. In livestock, watch for skin rash or increased sensitivity



to sun exposure, diarrhea, weakness, respiratory distress, muscle tremors, premature births, or fetal death.

Prime Conditions for HAB Growth — Cyanobacteria thrive when environmental conditions provide a “perfect storm” for growth:

- **Stagnant Water** — Still or low flow water, such as farm ponds or backwater areas.
- **Nutrient Rich** — High levels of phosphorus and nitrogen, possibly from fertilizer runoff or direct manure input.
- **Warm Temperatures** — Prolonged sunlight and warm water temperatures — above 77°F — during warm weather.

How to Monitor for HABs — In 2025, the S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) issued its first Recreational Watch after identifying toxin producing HAB species in Lake Hartwell on April 30, with the latest Recreational Advisory issued for Lake Thurmond on November 25. Because of this wide window, producers should regularly inspect ponds and other water sources, especially on the downwind pond edges where wind and waves concentrate the blooms.

• **The Stick Test** — If you can lift the algae out of the water with a stick, it is likely non-toxic filamentous algae. If it breaks apart and cannot be lifted or coats the stick like paint, it may be cyanobacteria.

• **The Jar Test** — Place a water sample in a clear jar and refrigerate it overnight. If the algae floats to the surface, it is a strong indicator of cyanobacteria.

• **Submit a Sample** — A Clemson University lab can confirm identification and provide management recommendations for \$20

(in-state); samples can be dropped off at any county Extension office. Results typically take 7–10 business days. See Submitting an Algae Sample for Identification at <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/submitting-an-algae-sample-for-identification> for more information.

Action Steps: Response and Recovery – If you suspect a bloom is present, take immediate action to protect your herd:

- **Remove Animals (and People)** – Immediately exclude livestock from the suspected water source using temporary fencing or by moving the herd to a different pasture.

- **Provide Alternative Water** – Ensure animals have access to a clean, reliable supply, such as well water or a municipal source.

Note – Be aware that even “clean” sources can become contaminated if equipment like troughs, hoses, or buckets has been exposed to the bloom. Be sure water in troughs is regularly refreshed and thoroughly clean, and flush any shared infrastructure.

- **Report to the Clemson HAB Response Team** – Contact your local livestock or water resource agent immediately. Our statewide response team can assist with rapid sampling and positive identification to determine if the bloom is toxic. Having pictures of the pond or water source and a water sample, including potential HAB growth, may be helpful.

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Have You Herd

Improving Cow Feed Efficiency – Strategies for Healthier Cows and Higher Profits

By SKYLAR DUDLEY, N.C. State University -- ANS 402 Beef Management

Managing a cattle operation is very expensive, with feed being the most expensive cost. About 55–75 percent of the overall production cost is feed¹. With this being said, producers want to improve cattle feed efficiency because of the overall positive impact it can bring. Before we get too far ahead, you may be wondering what feed efficiency is. Feed efficiency is the ratio of outputs to inputs — feed-to-gain ratio. In the context of cattle, it is the units of feed (or forage) consumed divided by the animal’s weight gain over time. Measuring feed efficiency within a herd is very challenging due to many factors at play, like sex, age, breed, production level, environmental effects, and physical activity. This can also affect the efficiency outcome. Our primary focus in this article is on what many consider the most important — cows.

When measuring feed efficiency in cows, it is important to balance amino acid supply with energy intake. Supplementing amino acids like methionine can help optimize forage digestion. If you are a producer, you may be asking yourself, why does this matter? I’m glad you asked! Improving feed efficiency leads to healthier, longer living cows, along with lower vet costs and better reproductive success². So, it’s a win-win, but let’s go more in-depth. Nutritional balance and metabolic health are key for the cows to maintain a good body condition score

(BCS). Poor feed efficiency can lead to nutrient deficiencies, affect growth and milk production, and cause metabolic disorders like ketosis and acidosis.⁵ Improving your cow’s feed efficiency can create a stronger immune system and disease resistance⁵. Having a strong immune system on top of being feed efficient can improve reproductive health and fertility. This is a huge benefit for cow/calf operations! Maintaining a healthy body condition improves timely breeding, pregnancy success, higher weaning rates, and healthier calves. In Michigan State’s article, “*Increasing Efficiency of Nutrient Use to Enhance Profit and Environmental Stewardship*,” Michael VandeHaar illustrates a model that helps demonstrate the concept of inefficient cows struggling with fertility, having delays in estrus cycles, and having longer calving intervals based on the use of energy and protein, as seen in Table 1⁴. The longevity and productivity of the cow increase as well, along with less metabolic stress and being more resilient to weather changes and other negative environmental effects like disease and shortages. With all that being said, improving feed efficiency can equal fewer resources being used in the long run and reduce pressure on land, water, and feed supply.

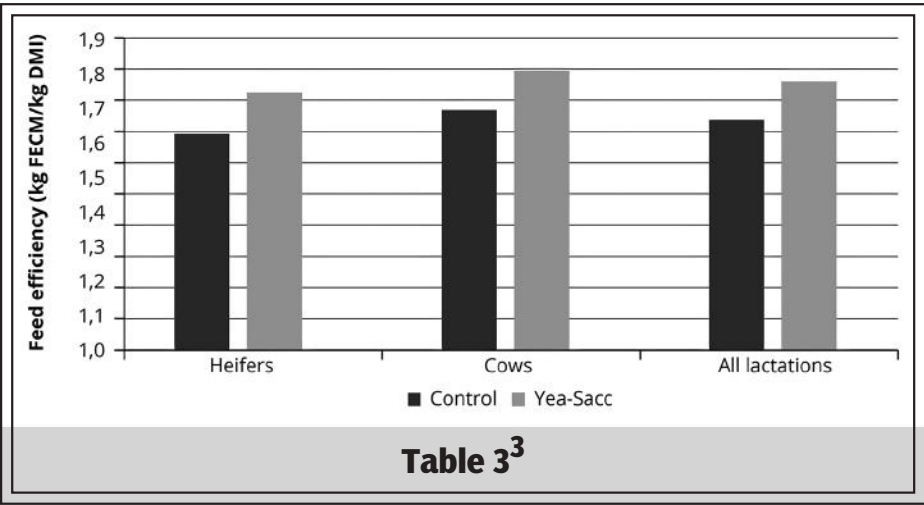
Impact of selected management changes on energy and protein efficiency for a farm with 21,000 lb milk/cow/year ¹		
	Energy	Protein
Base feed efficiency	21%	28%
Increase milk production 10% (2,100 lb/year)	+0.7%	+0.4%
Increase longevity from 3 to 4 lactations	+0.6%	+0.5%
Decrease maintenance requirement 10%	+1.1%	+1.2%
Improve efficiency of digestion by 10%	+1.2%	+1.0%
Reduce age at first calving 2 months	+0.3%	+0.3%
Reduce calving interval 1 month	+0.4%	+0.4%
Feed cows >150 DIM a diet with 2% less CP	+0.0%	+1.3%
The added benefit of any of these generally decreases with each successive improvement. This is especially true for milk productivity. These figures are based on the model used in VandeHaar (1998).		

Table 1⁴

Effect of whole soybeans on reproduction in mature cows				
	30 days prior		Calving	
	Soybean	Control	Soybean	Control
Cycling, %	75	56	50	46
First Service, %	76	62	60	56
Pregnant, %	93	86	87	86

Table 2²

Now that I have your attention, let’s talk about some supplements you can use to help improve feed efficiency in your cows. Amino acids are extremely important in a cow’s diet to meet maintenance and growth². Supplementing methionine or blood meal can help meet the amino acid requirement². Dried distillers’ grain, soyhulls, and corn gluten meal are good supplements to meet the protein and energy requirements in the diet². Data collected by the University of Missouri regarding lipid supplementation of whole soybeans in mature cows was shown to improve sperm quality, egg



quality, and embryo transfer success within mature cows, as seen in Table 2². Another study demonstrated a visual representation that providing a yeast based supplement to cows has been shown to improve lactation, as seen in Table 3³, rumen function, and help digest fiber and other complex carbohydrates³.

Looking at more of the strategic side of improving feeding efficiency can take some time. Some strategies that are more time effective are optimizing nutrition and forage quality, assessing the quality of feed you are already using, reducing stress, having an optimal environment, and monitoring and evaluating performance. Optimizing nutrition and forage quality is important because providing a high quality forage with balanced energy, protein, and fiber can improve nutrient digestion and absorption. Using feed additives and supplements with minerals and vitamins can help ensure nutrition requirements are met¹; this goes along with assessing the feed that you are currently using to see what you may need to adjust³. Feed storage and handling practices can affect the nutrient quality of your product. “Studies have shown that a significant portion, up to 45 percent, of grown and purchased feed inputs are lost or underutilized throughout the feed process³.” Minimizing stress, specifically heat, is a somewhat easy fix to help improve feed efficiency. One of the more time consuming strategies to help improve feed efficiency in cows is selecting for feed efficient genetics. Find breeds with low residual feed intake (RFI), utilize

expected progeny differences (EPDs), implement genetic testing, and propagate cattle with better feed conversion ratios (FCR)¹. Improving feed management by adjusting rations based on growth and production goals, reducing feed waste by avoiding overfeeding, keeping fresh feed, and having clean bunks. Using automation intake systems like BioControl is a great way to keep track of individual consumption and efficacy³, but it can be more costly and take more time because of the installation process. No matter which strategies you decide to use, make sure you monitor and evaluate performance. Tracking BCS, having regular weigh-ins, and identifying low efficient animals are important to document. Remember, “If you don’t measure it, you can’t manage it!” – Dr. Carrie Pickworth.

Measuring feed efficiency is much simpler than many may think. Feed Conversion Ratio and Residual Feed Intake are the two formulas that are used to calculate feed efficiency. The formula for FCR is FCR = total feed intake (lbs.)/weight gain (lbs.). This is commonly used in feedlots. The lower the FCR is, the more efficient the cow is. To find RFI, you must subtract the actual feed intake from the expected feed intake. A negative RFI consumes less feed than expected while maintaining performance, which means that the cow is more efficient. Another way to measure feed efficiency is by tracking individual feed intake. A great way to measure individual intake is through automated systems. Having a feed trial of 70 days and weighing biweekly can allow you to measure individual intake more accurately¹.

Lastly, you’re probably thinking, if I – the producer – do all this to improve my cow and herd, what do I get in return? Improving feed efficiency in your cows will reduce your cost of production and increase your profitability and productivity in the long run⁴, and potentially within the year. The carcass weight, along with the overall health of the cow, improves as well. You can minimize the environmental impact of methane emissions by improving feed efficiency.

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Have You Herd is written as a portion of ANS 402 Beef Management course requirement at N.C. State University Department of Animal Science under the instruction of Dr. Carrie Pickworth. The opinions of Julia Magnanini are not necessarily those of N.C. State University or Dr. Carrie Pickworth.



Focus on Forage

Identifying Pasture Problems Through Indicator Weeds

By HANNAH CONOVER, KATIE SILVER, & HUNTER TAYLOR, *Clemson University*

Weeds are often viewed as a problem to be controlled, but their presence in your pasture can provide valuable insight into underlying conditions. Certain species tend to thrive in areas where soil fertility is low, pH is off, grazing pressure is excessive, or soil structure is unfavorable. By identifying which weeds are present and where they are growing, you can begin to diagnose the root causes of decreased pasture productivity. Rather than focusing solely on herbicide applications, understanding these indicator species will allow you to plan a targeted, more effective management strategy that addresses the sources of the issue, all while supporting long term pasture health.

Low pH and Nutrient Deficiency Indicators – The Carolinas are known for naturally having low pH soils that often accompany poor fertility. The issue can be further compounded when either soil health is not looked at properly or is not maintained. This can be accelerated when forage is cut for hay, but it is also possible in grazing situations. The presentation of this can occur because, in extreme cases, the roots get burned from the acidity in the soil, thus allowing for weeds to come in and take over. The other reason

this occurs is because at low pH, the soil nutrients are not retained adequately or are changed into a form that the plant is not able to uptake. Common weeds that frequently indicate these problems are broomsedge, dog fennel, sweet vernal grass, and mouse ear chickweed. There is also the added volunteer clover that will appear when there is specifically low nitrogen, but this does not mean that the rest of the fertility is low.

Overgrazing and Loss of Forage Competition – Weeds can be found in areas where the land has been overgrazed by livestock. Overgrazing results in a lack of ground cover by the desired species of grass forage, such as bermudagrass, bahiagrass, tall fescue, or summer annual species. Once the bare ground is exposed, the weeds that erupt from overgrazing will typically need to be treated by means of chemical or mechanical removal. It is important to note that most of the weeds can indicate multiple issues. Therefore, if this weed is found in your pasture, it may indicate another problem, not just that it has been overgrazed. Some examples of these weeds include, but are not limited to, spiny amaranth, bitter sneezeweed, Carolina horsenettle, and annual bluegrass.

There are some ways to prevent overgrazing pastures. Stocking the appropriate number of livestock, implementing rotational grazing strategies, scouting pastures for weed issues, and regularly measuring forage mass are all ways to help prevent the pastures from becoming overgrazed.

Weeds Associated with Soil Compaction – Other common pasture issues that can cause an influx of weeds are compaction and poor drainage. These two often go hand in hand, as heavy equipment use, repeated livestock traffic, overgrazing, and working wet soils can all contribute to the problem. The



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result is reduced pore space, poor root growth, limited airflow, and restricted water movement. Species that thrive in these conditions don't hesitate to take advantage of the situation; they can tolerate saturated, low oxygen soils where desirable forages struggle. As a result, these weeds often outcompete productive grasses in stressed areas.

Weed species that tell us we have a compaction problem include, but are not limited to, rush, chickweed, Virginia buttonweed, and buttercup. Rush is one of the strongest indicators in this situation, commonly found in low lying, poorly drained areas. It's easily identifiable as an upright, clump forming plant with a spiky appearance. Excess moisture and poor soil structure also favor Virginia buttonweed and chickweed, with buttonweed becoming especially aggressive once established. Rounding out this group is buttercup. Don't let the pretty yellow flower trick you; these weeds can cause issues for your livestock. Buttercup is associated with overgrazed, compacted pastures and low fertility. For compacted fields, implement rotational grazing to allow the area to rest, improve your drainage where possible, and maintain proper soil fertility to encourage a competitive forage stand to drive out the weeds.

Practical Steps for Long Term Pasture Improvement – The common response to seeing most indicator weeds is to go and treat them with herbicides. While chemical use is a temporary solution to the problem at hand, long term control requires addressing the underlying issue. Once the weed has been identified, the associated issue should be managed. With a large portion of these, the next step should be conducting a soil test. This will aid in not only knowing what is deficient but also the amount of fertilizer or lime needed to alleviate this issue. Solutions for the overgrazed or compacted soils are not always as straightforward. In some cases, adjusting the grazing practices can aid in alleviating both. Allowing the forages to grow

taller and for longer periods will also allow for a better root structure that can help with the compaction. In other instances, picking or diversifying the forages can be the solution. For example, planting tiller radishes can help break up compaction problems. In other cases, planting additional forages will add nutritional content when the base forage might not be at its most productive. This can be as simple as adding a summer annual in a fescue pasture so that your primary grass can rest during the hot and dry months to help prevent thinning.

Key Takeaways for Pasture Management – The key takeaway for pasture management is to ultimately treat the problem rather than the symptoms. This will help to prevent other issues from arising or a continuation of the same problem. Make sure to routinely submit your soil samples and scout your pastures for unwanted weeds and pests often. If you have questions regarding weeds in your pastures, contact your local extension agent.

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You Decide!

By **DR. MIKE WALDEN**, *William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus, N.C. State University*

You Decide: Is the Economy Headed for a Nosedive?. At the beginning of 2026, most economists, including me, were predicting a reasonably decent year for both businesses and households. We expected growth, a jobless rate of 4–4.5 percent, and a rise in worker earnings. Interest rates were trending downward and were expected to continue on that path. While price inflation would not be eliminated, it would hover around 2.5 percent, only slightly above the Federal Reserve’s goal of a 2 percent increase in prices for the year.

But forecasts have changed since the start of the Iran War. Economists are busy recalibrating their models and trying to assess what economic impacts the conflict will have. It seems to be clear that the conflict will have negative impacts. The questions are how negative and what that bad news will entail.

Wars can have both bad and good impacts on the economy. The bad impacts are obvious — including death and injuries to people and destruction to buildings, property, and infrastructure. However, wars can stimulate economic growth and can also generate new innovations. World War II helped the U.S. economy recover from the Great Depression by creating more production and jobs. Several innovations developed during World War II have had positive impacts that persist today, including jet engines, microwaves, and penicillin.

Regarding the Iran War, the hoped for benefits include peace in the Middle East and a consistent and reliable flow of oil from the region to the world. Some experts argue there has been a “terror premium” embedded in the price of oil that will be eliminated if Iran is defeated. The removal of the terror premium could send oil prices below their pre-war level.

But the focus now is on the economic costs of the conflict. One obvious cost is the price hikes we’ve seen in oil and gasoline. In economics, when the supply of an often-used product drops, its price rises. Gasoline is processed from oil, and world oil supplies have declined in the range of 5–10 percent since the war began. This has prompted an average 80¢ increase in the per gallon gas price.

However, the price impacts of the Iran War go beyond gasoline. An estimated 40 percent of the world’s supply of fertilizer originates in the Middle East. Fertilizer is a key input for crop production. The war has already cut fertilizer supplies for farmers, which in turn increases both fertilizer and food prices. Some economists are predicting a doubling of food price inflation, with the annual rate jumping from 2 to 4 percent.

Lastly, the Middle East conflict has had an adverse effect on

the stock market. The Dow Jones average is down 10 percent since the war began. While this has clearly hurt investors, there is also a broader impact. Research indicates aggregate consumer spending tends to drop when the stock market drops. Since consumer spending is the most important driver of the economy, stock market drops can lead to a broader economic contraction.

As a result of these trends, it shouldn’t be surprising that forecasts for a recession this year have increased. Some economists are now predicting a 50 percent chance for a downturn in the economy in 2026, almost double the chance prior to the start of the conflict. A recession means a decline in aggregate economic production, a rise in unemployment, and a reduction in household income.

The outlook for inflation has also worsened. Forecasts in early 2026 put the year’s inflation rate around 2.5 percent. Now, many economists are expecting the 2026 inflation rate to be in the 3 to 4 percent range.

If we do see a recession and a higher inflation rate in 2026, we will have a “stagflation” economy. Economists define stagflation as an economy in a recession and with a rising inflation rate. This is unusual because during a recession consumers buy less, which in turn puts downward pressure on prices. But with stagflation, we get the worst of both worlds — fewer jobs and higher prices.

Of course, these worrying forecasts are dependent on how the events in the Middle East evolve. We are now entering the second month of the war. If the fighting is successfully concluded in a short period of time, then the economic forecasts will be much better. But if it continues for months, then the odds of the worrisome forecasts increase.

When trying to predict the future, I think it always helps to consider the positive and the negative. We are in that situation now. Which will occur? You decide.

You Decide: Is COVID-19 to Blame for High Housing Costs and Taxes?. COVID-19 first appeared over six years ago. The most devastating pandemic in the country in a century left scars and impacts on millions of people and numerous parts of the economy.

One of those impacts has been on the housing market. The claim has been made that COVID-19’s impact has led to affordability issues for homebuyers and tax issues for homeowners. I will provide the information for this claim and let you decide.

COVID-19 caught the country by surprise when it first appeared in January 2020. As the virus rapidly spread, unprecedented measures were taken. Wearing masks, limiting social interaction,

and closing many businesses, schools, and other social activities were ordered. Supplies of everyday products rapidly declined. Businesses worried about paying their employees, and households stressed about paying their bills.

Just like addressing the health crisis caused by the pandemic, the economic crisis required national actions by the federal government for two reasons. First, COVID-19 was a national crisis. Second, only the federal government has the resources to address national crises.

Two parts of the federal government were used in rescuing the economy. The first was the president and Congress approving legislation to fund relief programs. The second was the Federal Reserve — the nation's central bank — creating money and causing interest rates to fall.

The efforts were massive. In 2020 and 2021, under two different presidents and terms of Congress, \$5.1 trillion was injected into the economy to help households spend and businesses make payroll. Over the same time period, the Federal Reserve, which has powers to influence interest rates and private spending, slashed their key interest rate to effectively 0 percent and pumped \$6 trillion of cash into the economy. As a result, although the COVID-19 recession was severe, with unemployment hitting almost 15 percent, the economy began recovering after only two months.

Yet there were some major adverse consequences, particularly in the housing market. With 30 year fixed mortgage rates below 3 percent, the lowest rate in modern history, and many households flush with savings from federal COVID-19 assistance programs, there was a surge in homebuying after the pandemic. Yet during the pandemic, home building declined. The result was a mismatch between buying and selling. More people wanting to buy the limited supply of homes meant the price of homes shot up. Between 2020 and 2022, home prices rose 41 percent. Using Federal Reserve data, since 2022 home prices have bounced up and down, with little trend.

It wasn't just the prices of homes that rose — so did the cost of almost everything. The overall annual inflation rate, which captures all consumer prices, rose from just over 1 percent in 2020 to almost 7 percent in both 2021 and 2022. This caused the Federal Reserve to shift course and fight inflation by increasing their policy interest rate. Consequently, most private interest rates also increased, including mortgage rates, which climbed to over 7 percent.

The conclusion is the situation homebuyers have recently faced, with high housing prices and high mortgage rates, had its beginning during COVID-19. And while mortgage rates are now lower than their recent high, it usually takes a major financial crisis, such as occurred in 2008, for big pullbacks in housing prices to occur.

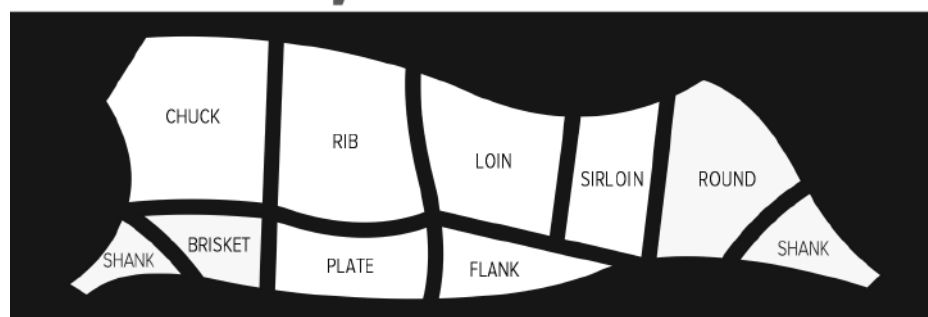
It can be argued COVID-19 created an equal challenge for many homeowners. Homes are considered a financial asset, and as a result, owners are periodically taxed on the asset's value. In North Carolina, the taxing authority is the local county. And while the taxing authority can lower the tax rate to ease the pain from a higher home value, the average North Carolina homeowner has seen a 27 percent increase in their property tax bill since 2019, almost three times higher than the increase in average household income.

This situation has led to proposals to make adjustments in the

North Carolina property tax, such as limiting the annual increase in the tax payment. Some states are actually talking about eliminating the property tax. But it should be remembered that in most states, including North Carolina, property taxes are the major revenue source for local governments, funding various functions including education and public safety.

Is the culprit behind issues both homebuyers and homeowners have been facing in recent years summed up in one word, COVID-19? You decide.

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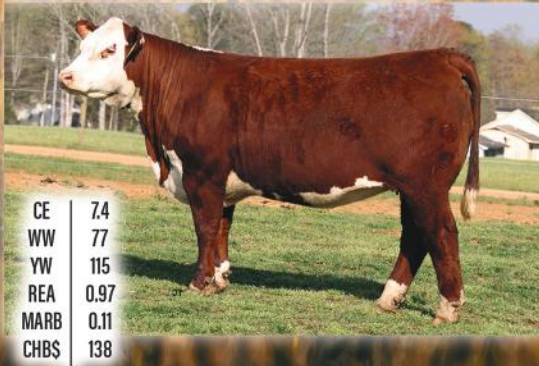
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BOLD Conference Builds Next Generation of Hereford Leaders. CMT Artist of the Year, Cody Johnson, helped pave the motivational foundation for Hereford youth attending the fifth annual Building on Leadership Development (BOLD) conference in Desdemona, Tex., on March 26–29.

“Pray for roadblocks and be comfortable with them coming,” Johnson encouraged the 26 BOLD participants. “Don’t ever let your vision get blurry by fame and success.”

National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members, from across the country and Canada, forged foundational leadership skills and industry connections during the elite leadership event hosted by Gary and Kathy Buchholz of GKB Cattle at their Hi Point Ranch.

The impressive lineup of speakers didn’t stop at Johnson, though. Tyson Durfey, world champion rodeo athlete; Shane Bedwell; and Tyler Norvell, president of Norvell Consulting and CEO of Oklahoma Youth Expo and Cattlemen’s Congress, provided participants with valuable insights and expertise.

“Your mind will give you the power to do anything that you want to do, even if there’s no money, even if it’s hard, even if it’s difficult, even if in the moment it looks like you can’t do it, you just take one step.” Durfey said. “You don’t have to think about the million steps after, but just the one step, and then the next step.”

Learning by Doing – BOLD attendees also participated in a variety of leadership building activities, including workshops led by NJHA board members, which focused on strengthening



communication skills and leading with purpose. Along the way, BOLD participants had plenty of opportunities to explore career opportunities and learn how to better position themselves for their future careers. Lauren Perez, of LEP Associates, led a session focused on resume writing and mock job interviews. Participants received advice from industry mentors based on their personal experiences during career

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roundtables. These roundtable discussions included Gary Buchholz of GKB Cattle; Bruce Everhart of Everhart Herefords and Hereford Youth Foundation of America board member; Dr. Remy Wyatt, Ph.D., of BioZyme Inc.; and Cody Mahan of Merck Animal Health. These industry leaders’ passion for the future of agriculture was inspiring.

“You are a product of the people you place around you. You elevate each other,” Johnson reminded attendees. “You’ve been gifted with an opportunity to be on a different level than others, and that comes with pressure, but pressure can make a diamond.”

Attendees emphasized the connections made through the conference. “The BOLD conference is such a great opportunity to work on so many different aspects of leadership and spend time

networking and getting to know so many wonderful people within the industry,” commented Elayna Hawkins of Freeport, Michigan.

BOLD speakers, mentors, and industry leaders challenged participants to look forward, define their passions, and set purposeful goals for their leadership journeys, careers in the beef industry, and beyond.

About the American Hereford Association. *AHA, with headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., is one of the largest U.S. beef breed associations. The not-for-profit organization along with its subsidiaries — Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, Hereford Publications Inc. (HPI) and American Beef Records Association (ABRA) — provides programs and services for its members and their customers, while promoting the Hereford breed and supporting education, youth, and research.*





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NEWS

Profitability is Motivating. With today's historic profitability, cow/calf producers are looking at opportunities to rebuild — when conditions allow. Drought is still elongating the timeline for increasing the national cowherd. A slower rebuild could actually help keep the current returns we're experiencing stronger for a longer stretch. Fewer feeder cattle and a cow herd unlikely to return to this cattle cycle's peak in 2019 of 31.7 million mean oversupply isn't looming anytime soon.

If packer margins remain positive and beef demand stays strong, boxed beef values should continue to sustain larger gross revenue for the entire chain — from packer to feedyard to the cow/calf sector. That matters when annual cow costs are hitting \$900–\$1,400 per head.

While every operation pencils out differently, current market dynamics suggest the potential for nearly \$1,000 per head profit. Weather remains the wild card, but the bigger picture points to a marketplace that's still favorable for those able to seize the opportunity.

Meat Counter Decisions. Flavor is one of the top decision makers at the meat case. Every time. And right now, that expectation is accelerating growth in value added products, especially within CAB Prime. Consumers aren't just browsing these CAB items; they're choosing them because they trust the eating experience to deliver.

That trust is opening doors across new products for retail and foodservice partners, from CAB Prime rib shaved steak and homestyle meatballs to burnt end sausage links and tri-tip. They're becoming go-to purchases, particularly with younger shoppers. Millennials are leading the shift, with 38 percent frequently buying value added products, now representing a growing share of fresh meat sales.



CAB deli products signal quality consumers recognize and actively seek out. It ranks near the top for quality perception and purchase intent, with shoppers willing to pay more and even drive further to find it. Nearly three out of four consumers say offering CAB deli meats would improve their opinion of a grocery store. That's a direct reflection of values tied to the product you produce.

This momentum starts with the great tasting beef you raise. Consistent, high quality beef is what allows CAB to expand into new spaces and still meet the expectation of what matters — flavor

Certified Angus Beef Launches New Podcast. Ever wondered how CAB got its start — or how the brand continues to drive demand for Angus genetics today? The *CAB Bite* podcast will answer those questions and more. In 20 minutes or less, listeners will get an extra “bite” of news, insights, and practical takeaways. The podcast launched in April, with the first three episodes now available.

Podcast host and CAB director of producer communications, Lindsay Graber Runft, welcomes guests from the brand and across the beef community to talk about all things CAB and high quality

beef production.

New episodes will be launched on an ad hoc basis as part of the brand's growing communications efforts to connect cattle producers with valuable news and information. The short form podcast aims to give the beef community an up close, behind-the-scenes look at CAB and its supply chain.

CAB president John Stika and American Angus Association chief executive officer Mark McCully are among the first podcast guests, with podcast topics covering the brand's inception, CAB's live animal specification, and international production in Uruguay.

About the Host – Lindsay Graber Runft leads efforts to build awareness in the beef supply chain and guides the brand's voice in the cattle market. She works closely with the brand communications and production teams to build strategic relationships with partners in the beef industry. Lindsay is a fifth generation cattle producer and lives on her family's cow/calf ranch in Kansas. Alongside her husband, Cody, they're raising three kids who are already looking forward to being the next generation at the ranch.

The CAB Bite podcast can be found at www.cabcattle.com/podcast and on all major podcast platforms.



Who is Certified Angus Beef? At Certified Angus Beef, we know people want to put great meals on the table. Our employees work across the beef supply chain to ensure chefs and home cooks find and prepare the best Angus beef. Led by our culinary, beef, and marketing experts, our team provides consultation, marketing materials, training, market insights, and tools that help businesses like grocery stores and restaurants thrive. Our team is also dedicated to sharing the story of family farmers and ranchers who supply the brand.



ANGUS

THE BUSINESS BREED

UPDATE

Nominations Open for the 143rd Annual Convention of Delegates.

Members can nominate delegates to represent them at the annual meeting in November. Delegate nominations are open for the 143rd Annual Convention of Delegates. The meeting will take place November 16 in Louisville, Ken., in conjunction with the Angus convention. Delegates serve as an important part of the democratic process, which governs and guides the American Angus Association. They are elected by the membership body to represent their respective state or district at the annual meeting, where delegates will conduct business and elect members to the association's board of directors.

The nomination period for the 2026 elections is open through June 19. Members can check their eligibility status in their AAA Login account by going to My Account > My AAA Member Information. Eligible members can nominate or be nominated by a member who lives in the same herd state or district; they can also nominate themselves. Nominees should be highly involved in the Angus business, willing to attend the meeting, and able to represent Angus breeders.

A link to the nomination form and a unique pin will be emailed at the start of the nomination period to all eligible voting active life and regular association members with an email address on file. Physical copies of the nomination form will be mailed to eligible voting members without an email address on file. Nominations submitted online or by mail must be received no later than 5:30 p.m. on June 19.

Following the close of the nomination period, qualified nominees will be listed on a state/district ballot sent to all eligible voting members in July to vote for the final slate of state/district delegates to the 143rd Annual Convention of Delegates. The annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2026 Angus Convention and Angus events at the NAILE, November 13–16. Members can reach out to the Member Services team at 816-383-5100 or angus@angus.org with questions or a request for a paper nomination form.

Association Prepares to Transition to Paperless Business.

Member business conducted with the association will move to paperless preferences in June 2026. Over the decades, the American Angus Association has been working to gradually transition business processes to paperless. These efforts have been in pursuit of two goals — to better serve the membership in a more timely and efficient manner and to ensure the responsible use and allocation of member dollars.

The Digital Age – The effort can be traced to key moments in Angus history, including the first online registration completed in 1999.

A decade later, nearly 69 percent of registrations were done online. Today, less than five percent of registrations are processed by paper.

Following closely behind that transition was the launch of AAA Login, which has become the hub for member business. Today, a majority of members manage their herd inventory, register or transfer cattle, submit data, order DNA testing, and access their work history with the association through Login.

Another high impact implementation was the ability to offer electronically stored certificates. Members have the option today to store their registration papers in Login, reducing the stacks of papers piling up in their ranch office and cutting down the turnaround time on transfers. This remains an optional preference that can be opted into under My Account. In Fiscal Year 2025, 70 percent of records were stored electronically.

In recent years, staff has also turned to modernizing internal processes, which reduce the shuffle of paper records across the desks of our Member Services team.

Paper by the Numbers – Today, billing statements, invoices, and suspense letters account for one of the largest collective uses of paper within the Member Services department. Broken down, in an average year, the team sends out roughly

- 11,000 billing statements by mail
- 23,000 invoices by mail
- 38,000 suspense letters by mail

When you tally that up, it's nearly 72,000 printed items.

The Next Paperless Effort – As a result of a recent board of directors discussion, the association plans to transition association business to paperless preferences. This switch, planned for June 2026, is an effort to serve the membership in a more timely and efficient manner. No longer will delays or lost mail impact members' business needs.

All memberships with an email on file and an AAA Login account will be switched to paperless, including invoicing and suspense letters. This change includes all business conducted with the Association, AGI, and AngusMedia (API). Regardless of current paperless preferences, members can access their work history with the association and its entities in their Login account, with the ability to view suspense items, print invoices, and pay a balance.

Members who wish to continue to receive paper communication will be able to opt out by contacting the Member Services team at angus@angus.org prior to June. There will be no additional fee for paper billing.

Resources for conducting business through AAA Login will be available and communicated in the coming months via member communication platforms.

A Fresh Face – The Angus Mobile App Just Got Easier to Use.

Redesigned to give easier access and visibility to your favorite tools – right at your fingertips. Today's Angus breeder relies on timely, accurate information to make informed decisions. The new Angus Mobile app allows you to quickly access a variety of data entry screens right from your mobile device. The new version reflects the American Angus Association's commitment to delivering practical, accessible tools that support members in real world settings.

What's new for members:

- On-demand data submission, including EZ Reg, transfers, calving book entries, breeding data, and more
- A customizable quick menu to your favorite tools
- Mobile friendly herd inventory searches to track current calf inventories and create animal sets and sire groups in the field
- An expanded My Herd experience, with easy access to work history orders, reports, DNA results, and account balances
- User friendly browsing of sale books and sale reports
- A centralized Angus calendar and news hub featuring important sales, events, shows, and member announcements

With expanded mobile functionality and improved access to tools and services, Angus Mobile is designed to help you stay connected, informed, and productive — wherever your work takes you.

Download or update Angus Mobile in the Apple App or GooglePlay store today. Installation requires Android 5.0 or iOS 15 or later.

Updates Refine Data Driven Herd Program. *AHIR's newest program enters second year; recognizes data focused Angus producers.* The Data Driven Herd program moved from ideation to fruition in 2025, recognizing 129 herds for their commitment to data collection. Many of the herds that achieved Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels in the first year, including Grassy Valley Angus of Tennessee, have been avid data collectors for many years. As a second-generation Angus breeder, Lee Duckworth says backing his herd with data has helped Grassy Valley deliver reliability to their customers.

“If someone knows what they’re buying with a higher degree of accuracy, having a favorable outcome in their program is a lot more likely,” says Duckworth, who believes his family’s efforts to earn Gold recognition in 2025 is an extension of their goal to better describe their cattle. “That’s the way I see the role of our EPDs (expected progeny differences) and our data systems. It gives us an advantage to predict outcomes for our customers.”

The 2025 recipients represent a large swath of the American Angus Association membership, with herds from 32 states ranging in cow inventory size from 10 to more than 4,000 head. Involvement

and the diversity of herds participating are expected to grow in the program’s second year, based on positive feedback, updates to the program, and a full year of data collection opportunities.

“It’s worked. It’s worked very well,” says Paul Bennett, member of the association’s board of directors, who served on the Breed Improvement Committee when the initial idea was floated a few years ago and is the chair of the committee for 2026.

He says the intention was to not only provide a way to recognize those doing the work but also encourage others to consider adding or expanding the practice in their operation.

The Data Driven Herd program stands apart from other Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) programs by focusing on the collection and submission of data sets for multiple traits. Members can earn Bronze, Silver, or Gold level recognition by submitting data for 8, 10, or 12 traits, respectively, during the year. Each trait has a minimum required number that is tailored both to the specific trait and to the individual herd’s size, which is determined by the herd’s enrollment of females in the Inventory Reporting program.

“What’s most exciting to me is the way in which breeders are taking part in the program, Bennett continues. “They don’t just want to be recognized; they want to be recognized because they got it right. It’s sparked a lot of conversation around best practices for data collection.”

The additional dialogue also prompted discussion on how the program could be adjusted to better fit the natural rhythm of data collection in most operations. As a result, the program’s collection period will now run August 1–July 31. This year, data submitted between August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2026, will count towards 2026 Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels. To allow for a larger variety of herds to participate, the minimum registration requirement has also been removed.

Additionally, moving forward, herds that have earned

Angus Update continued on the next page



Angus Update *continued from the previous page*

MaternalPlus distinction for the year will automatically meet the Data Driven Herd requirements for weaning weight and breeding records. As the second tier of Inventory Reporting and a requirement of Data Driven Herd's Gold Level, MaternalPlus requires herds to account for each female's calf by submitting a weaning weight or disposal code, in addition to breeding records on all retained heifers. This change considers operations selling pairs or open heifers.

The program's value and the expected increase in data submitted tie back to one of the breed's biggest advantages in the market — the largest single beef breed database. Built over the decades by the commitment of Angus breeders, the database is the foundation of a suite of tools that allows producers to make informed selection decisions.

"Submitting complete, comprehensive phenotypes is the ultimate service to our breed," Bennett says. "Our database is the greatest, most valuable tool that Angus breeders and the American Angus Association have. Now we can recognize breeders that are focused on breed improvement and doing the things that they need to do to improve the quality of the genetics that they're creating for the Angus breed."

Data Driven Herds can be identified by the Gold, Silver, and Bronze program logos placed on an operation's website, in their sale book, or in other marketing materials. Annually, recognized herds will have access to their respective level logo for personal marketing use. Herds will also be recognized among their peers at the Angus Convention and listed on [Angus.org](https://www.angus.org).

Interested in becoming a Data Driven Herd? The first step is enrollment in Inventory Reporting, which allows AHIR to determine minimum trait requirements unique to the individual operation's size through the cow inventory process. Fall calving herds have the opportunity to enroll in the upcoming May 1–July 15 enrollment period. Spring calving herd enrollment runs November 1–January 15.

Once enrolled, members can track their progress using the dashboard in their AAA Login account. A newly redesigned version of the dashboard will be available in late April and will allow members to quickly see how many records have been turned in for each trait and their progress towards Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. Additional information about the program and specific trait requirements can be found on the Data Driven Herd program page of [Angus.org](https://www.angus.org).

Batter Up! NJAA members get their head in the game for the 2026 NJAS. It's time to step up to the plate, National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members — we're almost ready for the first inning of the 2026 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

Juniors and their families are headed to Louisville, Ken., from July 11–18 for the Bases Loaded in the Bluegrass event. The NJAS is the event of the summer for our Angus family. From the show ring to other competitive events, there's something for every junior.

"All of our NJAS contests are extremely important," explains Paige Van Dkye, events coordinator for the American Angus Association. "Junior nationals is a weeklong event, and in addition to showing and exhibiting your cattle, we want to provide something educational."

That's where the skill-a-thon comes into play.

"This contest is to help make them more knowledgeable

producers of Angus cattle and our Angus product," Van Dyke adds.

This year, the event is getting a facelift so it can better achieve that goal. Van Dyke says competitors will now be expected to complete both a written exam and a hands-on practicum. The practicum is still being finalized, but she says it will feature skills necessary for life on a ranch, like using a blood card or collecting a tissue sampling unit (TSU) sample.

With the new practicum, the event will have scheduled time blocks for age divisions to compete. Van Dyke encourages members to check the NJAA website for more information, as well as the future release of a resource guide to help them prepare.

Beyond the Skill-a-thon, familiar favorites return to the event schedule. Juniors can connect with peers and new role models during the Angus Mentoring Program (AMP), dust off some acting skills during the Auxiliary sponsored All American Certified Angus Beef (CAB) Cook-Off, and showcase their quick thinking with contests like extemporaneous speaking.

While junior and intermediate members will once again be able to compete in the NJAA Showmanship Contest, 2026 also marks the first year that novice showmen can join in on the fun, too. Anyone between the ages of 7 and 9 can hit the ring in the new novice showmanship division.

"The junior board was adamant about getting younger members hooked on Angus like they were as young kids," explains Caitlyn Brandt, the association's director of events and junior activities. "That's really where the initial lowering of the age to seven years old started. I think they are most looking forward to the interactions they will have at NJAS with the young, up and coming junior members."

To help make this the event of the summer, the Angus Foundation is helping to sponsor a large portion of NJAS educational contests, including creative writing, graphic design, judging, photography, skill-a-thon, sweepstakes, herdsmanship, team sales, beef science poster, career development, coloring, extemporaneous speaking, and quiz bowl.



“Angus Foundation is happy to support the National Junior Angus Show through our junior contests,” says Angus Foundation executive director Jaclyn Boester. “We are excited to help develop and educate our junior members through these character development contests and continue to advance the mission of education through the Angus legacy.”

In addition to the Angus Foundation supporting the educational efforts of the NJAS, the organization will also offer scholarship and award endowments. The National Showmanship Contest through the Dean Hurlbut Memorial Award Fund, the carcass contest through the Briarwood Angus Farms/Curtis and Ann Long NJAS Carcass Contest Endowment Fund, the stockman contest through the Ed and Wilma Minix/Black Witch Farm Angus Youth Scholarship and Activities Endowment Fund, and the herdsman award through the Tom Wells Junior Herdsman Scholarship Endowment Fund are a few examples, along with other scholarships.

Assemble your team and start packing your bags, because the NJAA is ready to take you out to the ballgame in Kentucky.

Angus Foundation seeks donations for 2026 silent auction. Auction during the 2026 NJAS to raise funds for Angus education, youth, and research. The Angus Foundation is gearing up to host its annual silent auction during the 2026 NJAS. As preparations begin for this year’s

“Bases Loaded in the Bluegrass” offering, the Foundation is seeking donation lots from Angus supporters, farms, companies, and state junior Angus associations.

Proceeds from the auction help grow unrestricted support for the Angus Fund, advancing the Foundation’s mission to strengthen the Angus breed through education, youth leadership development, and research initiatives.

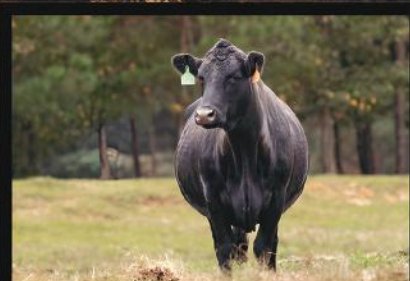
“For over 30 years, the silent auction has raised money to support scholarships, leadership events, and research that make a meaningful difference for the Angus breed,” said Jaclyn Boester, Angus Foundation executive director. “We’re excited to bring the event to Louisville and look forward to seeing the creativity and generosity of this year’s donors.”

Donation examples include artwork, gift baskets, cattle supplies, apparel, handcrafted items, unique experiences, and Angus collectibles. Items of all kinds are welcome.

The state junior Angus association that donates the highest selling lot will receive a \$250 donation to their association. This incentive encourages states to step up to the plate and help make the

Angus Update continued on the next page

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2026 auction a grand slam.

Past auctions have featured one-of-a-kind offerings, including vintage publications, framed prints, wine collections, and outdoor accessories. Each year provides a mix of unique and practical items that appeal to bidders of all ages.



This year’s silent auction will be available both in person at the Pavilion trade show at the Kentucky Exposition Center and online through [AngusLive](#). Lots will be posted prior to NJAS, offering supporters nationwide an opportunity to bid, even if they can’t join the fun in Louisville.

To donate an item, contact Kris Sticken at ksticken@angus.org or Jimmy Stickley or jstickley@angus.org. For more information about the Angus Foundation silent auction, visit www.angus.org/foundation.

Certified Angus Beef Cook-Off Contest calls for team rosters. The American Angus Auxiliary sponsored 43rd All American CAB Beef Cook-Off Contest is calling for states to submit their team rosters. All interested National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members must enter by May 15. The contest will be held on July 13 at the 2026 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). This year’s NJAS theme is Bases Loaded in the Bluegrass.

A beloved pastime at the NJAS, the Cook-Off Contest provides an opportunity for NJAA members to display their knowledge of the beef industry, skills in the kitchen, and creativity while enjoying friendly competition with fellow juniors. All contestants must be members of the NJAA and each team should be made up of two to six state junior Angus association members. States can enter a team in each category and age division.

“We are excited to host the 43rd All American CAB Cook-Off

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Contest, which serves as the oldest NJAS educational contest,” said Anne Lampe, American Angus Auxiliary beef education committee co-chair. “I have no doubt we will see the teams bring their A-game to this year’s cook-off. What better theme to lend itself to the event than America’s favorite pastime?”

Juniors will be challenged to grill up a menu that puts the ballpark concession stand to shame. The team will then present their meal to the judges in the form of a skit that is not only entertaining but also highlights the team’s knowledge of the CAB brand. The cuts selected for this year’s contest are:

- Steak – baseball cut top sirloin
- Roast – peeled coulotte (which also comes from the top sirloin)
- Other – frankfurters

The contest consists of three age categories — 7–13, 14–17, and 18–21. States should note that the junior age division will be open to contestants as young as seven years old, aligning with the new NJAA age rules. All ages will be determined as of January 1. Mixed teams may be entered but will be classified by the oldest member of the team. The contest will be judged by a panel of three judges. Winners in showmanship, recipe, and overall excellence will be awarded special prizes.

Rules and the online entry form are available on angusauxiliary.com. For contest questions, contact Anne Lampe at 620-874-4273 or amlampe.al@gmail.com or Anne Patton Schubert at 502-477-2663.

About the American Angus Auxiliary. For 70 years, the American Angus Auxiliary has been working with the AAA and the NJAA to promote youth and the Angus breed. The American Angus Auxiliary has worked to develop a number of educational and promotional programs to benefit everyone involved in the Angus industry. The American Angus Auxiliary presents more than \$18,000 in scholarships each year to ten young men and women involved in the Angus industry. As a member of the American Angus Auxiliary, you can play an important role by working to promote our youth and the Angus industry, meet the challenges of today’s society, and work toward developing our Angus youth into tomorrow’s leaders. The American Angus Auxiliary offers individuals interested in the welfare of the Angus breed the opportunity to work together to provide educational, promotional, and social programs and activities.

About the Angus Foundation. Established as a 501(c)(3) organization in 1980, the Angus Foundation remains focused on its mission to support Angus education, youth, and research. The organization has distributed more than \$4.9 million in youth scholarships since 1998 and has also invested more than \$1.4 million in beef cattle research in the past decade. For more information, contact the Angus Foundation at 816-383-5100.

ANGUS MEANS BUSINESS. The American Angus Association is the nation’s largest beef breed organization, serving more than 21,000 members across the United States, Canada, and several other countries. It’s home to an extensive breed registry that grows by more than 300,000 animals each year. The Association also provides programs and services to farmers, ranchers, and others who rely on Angus to produce quality genetics for the beef industry and quality beef for consumers. For more information about Angus cattle and the American Angus Association, visit www.angus.org.

North Carolina Angus Association

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COMMON GROUND



Relevance Is Not Static — Why Associations Must Keep Evolving

By MARK McCULLY, American Angus Association CEO

“Thoughts for the future of breed associations.”

For more than a century, associations like the American Angus Association have existed to serve a clear purpose — creating value for members through shared standards, trusted information, and community. But across the association landscape, one reality is becoming clear — value is no longer assumed. It must be defined, demonstrated, and continually re-earned.

Since stepping into this role several years ago, I’ve spent time studying associations beyond agriculture. I’ve looked at different business models, governance structures, and membership strategies to better understand what makes an association successful — or not.

A recent national survey of membership and trade groups confirmed associations are under increasing pressure to prove their relevance amid economic uncertainty, rapid technological change, and growing competition from for-profit providers. Perhaps most telling, membership is now widely viewed as an option rather than a necessity.

While the survey focused largely outside of agriculture and breed associations, the insights resonate. Each year I travel and visit with state Angus associations and speak with leaders who are grappling with declining membership and engagement. Historically, state and regional associations delivered value through marketing opportunities like state consignment sales. Today, however, online sales platforms and digital marketing allow breeders of all sizes

to reach large audiences without geographic limitations. Another traditional pillar of association value has been social connection. Those relationships still matter, but producers now have many alternative ways to stay connected.

On a national level, the American Angus Association does have built-in advantages. Membership is required to register or transfer cattle and to participate in key programs and governance. But even with those structural benefits, we recognize that engagement is never guaranteed. Membership is continually evaluated by our breeders, and relevance cannot be taken for granted.

The good news is associations that evolve beyond tradition to signal explicit value become an important part of a member’s success. Benefits they cannot easily access elsewhere, like strong education and clear outcomes aligned with real world needs, are no longer optional. We should be able to answer, “Why should I belong?” in a compelling way.

For the American Angus Association — and for our state partners — this is not about abandoning who we are. It is about sharpening our focus on why we exist.

One huge opportunity is with those entering the Angus business. Our data shows 30 percent of our members have joined in just the last five years. My observation is that I am not sure we — national and state associations — are engaging in the right way. Associations should be the first place new entrants look to learn, market, network, and connect. Are we doing enough to reach out or show them the path to get involved?

Relevance requires continual evaluation of member needs, honest assessment of our value proposition, and a willingness to evolve before external pressures force change. That evolution must be intentional, data driven, and grounded in the realities our members face every day.

The associations that thrive in the years ahead will be those that can clearly answer a simple question: How are we a solution for our members? When we can answer that, we are staying valuable — even in uncertain times.

The work of staying relevant is never finished. But it is work worth doing, because when associations evolve alongside their members, they don’t just survive change — they help shape it and help position their members for success.



Behind the Brand



Protecting Brand Integrity

By JOHN STIKA, Certified Angus Beef President

The value Certified Angus Beef delivers to Angus producers is anchored in the trust consumers around the world place in it to provide a consistent, great tasting beef experience. As the saying goes, “Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair.”

Protecting the brand’s integrity has been a core pillar since 1978. Integrity is so foundational that the brand was built around the premise — with integrity, nothing else matters, and without it, nothing else matters.

This means continually monitoring and governing the use of the brand’s logo and trademarks and ensuring only product from properly certified carcasses are packaged, distributed, and presented to consumers as the CAB brand.

Confidence in the box – Brand protection is initiated when cattle are delivered to any of more than 40 packing plants licensed to

produce CAB in the United States and Canada.

On respective sides of the border, graders for the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and the Canadian Beef Grading Agency (CBGA) adhere to the brand’s live animal Angus eligibility requirements and only certify carcasses that meet our ten science based specifications as CAB.

Once certified, CAB and CAB Prime carcasses are sorted in the cooler and railed off separate from each other and other commodity grades. While still under USDA and CBGA supervision, certified carcasses move from the cooler to fabrication. To maintain brand integrity, any shift on the fabrication tables to a different quality grade or program requires clear separation in time and space, during which all brand labels and packaging materials are updated. Simply put, this system has proven effective in ensuring only cuts from carcasses that qualify for CAB make it into a CAB labeled bag and box.

Tracking every pound – From there, it would be easy to lose track of product as it makes its way to more than 14,500 CAB partners, including further processors, distributors, grocery stores, and restaurants across 55 countries. However, our internal tracking system holds our licensed partners accountable for marketing and selling our product.

While any business may buy CAB, only “licensed” partners can promote the brand. In exchange for the opportunity to leverage the brand’s value and resources, licensed partners must report their specific product sales to us.

Our team then audits every level of distribution from the packer to the end user — i.e., prior to the consumer — for every pound sold as CAB. The main goal is to verify a partner is not selling more CAB product than it has purchased, in which case, it would not all be CAB and stands to undermine consumer brand trust.

Additional audits examine trademark or purchasing issues, primarily among restaurants. We work to correct any issue where “Certified Angus Beef” or the logo is used incorrectly — i.e. Certified Black Angus — or without our approval. The most common issue is when an unlicensed restaurant promotes the brand on its menu. These are always opportunities to educate and often moments to encourage licensing and purchasing of the advertised CAB item.

Our team identified and addressed 900 brand integrity issues last year. This method of intense data management is key to making sure we don’t undermine consumer trust. It’s how we maintain value for our partners and grow demand for high quality Angus genetics. It’s also how we collect the appropriate commissions for our product, which funds the brand. More on that next month.



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Angus Marbling 2.0

By TOM BRINK, Top Dollar Angus Founder & CEO

Introduction – The Angus breed has been steadily increasing its genetic marbling ability for 25 years. For registered Angus calves born in 2025, the average Marbling EPD stood at an impressive 0.92. Expect another step higher with 2026 born calves, followed by another bump up in 2027, and so on. The 2025 level is more than 1/3 of a marbling score (+0.39) higher-than-breed average in 2015. Incredibly, this ten year, 0.39 EPD increase is three times greater than the 0.13 EPD rise observed from 2005 to 2015. Marbling is not only increasing in the Angus breed; it is increasing at a faster pace than ever before and shows no sign of slowing down. See chart below.

The top 10 percent of current Angus sires stands today at a Marbling EPD of 1.21. To rank in the top 5 percent, a 1.41 Marbling EPD is required, while 1.78 achieves a top 1 percent ranking. These are pace setting marbling genetics. However, they do not represent a pinnacle for the breed. There are a small but growing number

of Angus bulls and females now meeting and exceeding the 2.0 Marbling EPD threshold, a level unimaginable only a decade ago.

While it might be tempting to write off this small group at the top as an irrelevant extreme, that is not the case. Angus Marbling 2.0 has arrived. Plenty of the highest marbling bulls in the Angus breed are being utilized in artificial insemination, which broadly extends their genetic influence. Over half of all registered Angus cattle are produced each year via artificial insemination or embryo transfer. Angus sires used in artificial breeding are a signpost for breed direction. And, genetically speaking, where the Angus breed goes, the U.S. beef industry follows.

A sizable percentage of the next generation’s Angus bulls have an elite marbling sire, which is creating more high marbling bulls. Their numbers are multiplying rapidly.

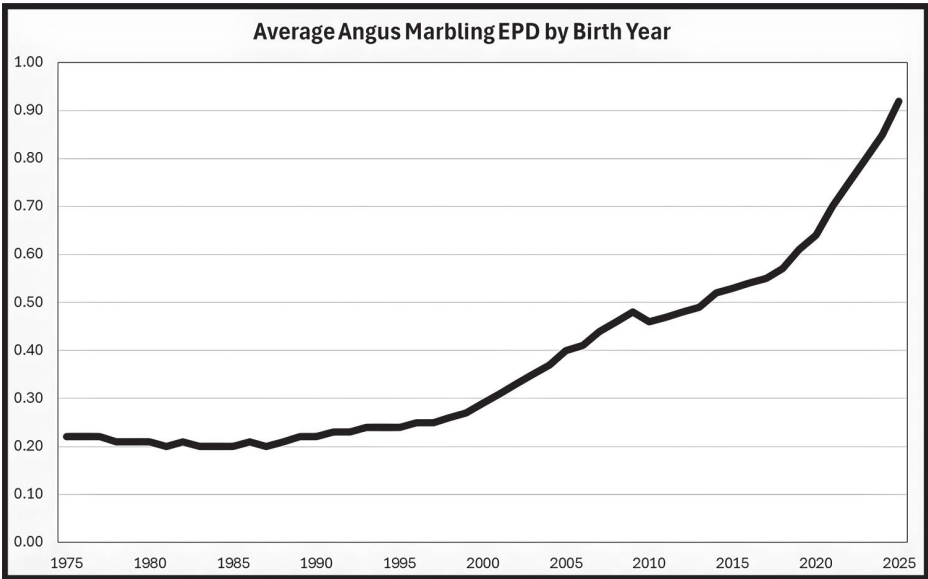
Simple math shows that a group of average marbling Angus females (Marbling EPD = 0.57) mated to a top 5 percent Marbling EPD Angus sire will produce progeny ranking in the top 25 percent of the breed. These results represent an astounding genetic leap over a quarter of the breed’s population in one generation. The same is true for commercial cows. Top marbling Angus bulls can genetically reposition the progeny of a mediocre marbling cowherd to a point well above industry average in a single calf crop. In the never-ending quest to produce more valuable cattle, such rapid improvement has never before been possible.

Beef Demand Benefits – Increased marbling ability in the U.S. beef industry’s largest breed has positively influenced consumer demand. Select beef represented 30 percent of the quality grade mix as recently as 2010. Prime and Choice grades accounted for less than 65 percent that year. Fast forward to 2025, and Select was down to 13 percent of all graded beef, while Prime and Choice exceeded 84 percent. No one even mentions sub-Select beef anymore, which has declined to 3 percent or less. During early 2026, Select grade percentages dropped into the high single digits, while Prime grading carcasses set new highs.

Consumers responded favorably to improving beef quality offered in the form of well marbled beef cuts. After struggling in the 1980s and 1990s, beef demand has been on a continual upward trek during the past 2½ decades. The well followed CattleFax Beef Demand Index hit yet another record in 2025, up roughly 50 percent compared to 1998–1999.

Better marbling is the cornerstone of better beef demand, and stronger demand positively impacts cattle prices whether supplies are large or small. Other breeds have also increased their marbling genetics, but Angus led the way. The Angus breed deserves significant credit for improving U.S. beef quality, even though other factors — like longer feeding periods — also contributed. The industry’s focus has appropriately shifted from “pounds pay” to “quality pounds pay more.”

To gain additional perspective on factors driving the increase in Angus marbling genetics and uncover what lies ahead in the Angus Marbling 2.0 era, we asked seven cattle and beef industry professionals to answer the five questions below. These experts represent different parts of the industry and different geographies. All seven agreed to share their thoughts.



Questions:

1. What is driving selection for increased Marbling in the Angus breed?
 2. What positive outcomes is this trend producing for the Angus breed and the beef industry?
 3. What are the potential negatives?
 4. What important uses/applications do you foresee for elite marbling Angus genetics?
 5. What will the future bring for marbling in the Angus breed?
- Implications for the industry?

The main portion of this paper is a compilation of the answers provided by our industry professionals listed below:

- Brian Bertelsen – U.S. Premium Beef – Dodge City, Kansas
- Casey Cobb – Friona Industries, Dalhart Cattle Feeders, and North Texas Cattle Feeders – Dalhart, Texas
- Kenny Hinkle – Hinkle’s Prime Cut Angus – Nevada, Missouri
- Harold Miller – 7 Triangle 7 Cattle Company – Akron, Colorado
- Jay Nordhausen – Ogallala Livestock Auction and North Platte Stockyards – Ogallala & North Platte, Nebraska
- Doug Stevenson – Basin Angus Ranch – Reed Point, Montana
- Gary Vandiver – Bob Vandiver Cattle Company – Richmond, Missouri

1. What is driving selection for increased marbling in the Angus breed?

Cobb – “The economic structure of grid pricing and related premiums is driving the selection focus on marbling. High marbling carcasses pay the largest premiums to feeders and producers.”

Bertelsen – “Dollars! Value based grids and formulas are sending a strong message to cattle feeders, and further up the production chain, that quality pays. Approximately 75 percent of all fed cattle are currently marketed on grids or carcass merit formulas. If a rancher still thinks marbling doesn’t matter, 75 percent of their feedlot customers care a great deal about it!”

“Total animal value is driven primarily by carcass weight and quality grade (marbling). Plus, marbling is not negatively correlated with other traits. That means ranchers can select for improved marbling without sacrificing the other valuable traits important to them.”

Nordhausen – “The biggest force driving selection for increased marbling in the Angus breed is carcass value and grid premiums for Prime and Upper 2/3 Choice. There are other factors which have helped speed up the process, such as the growing use of genomics and the American Angus Association’s selection indexes. It all goes back to dollars.”

Stevenson – “The selection for increased marbling in Angus cattle is simple economics. For a producer that feeds their cattle to finish, premiums paid in recent years for Certified Angus Beef (CAB) and Prime grade carcasses made it an easy decision to add more marbling.”

“Furthermore, genetic selection for increased marbling can increase revenue without a commensurate rise in production costs. For a producer that does not retain ownership, many premium branded programs are doing a better job identifying groups of

feeder cattle that will grade Prime and are spending extra money to purchase top genetic cattle with a proven track record.”

Vandiver – “What we’re seeing is a combination of market demand and economic incentives. Retailers, food service, and consumers are paying premiums for beef that grades Upper 2/3 Choice and Prime. Marbling is the trait that drives those grades. The motivation is economics, and genetic tools are the enabler. The marketplace is paying for marbling, and producers are responding.”

Question 1 Summary – Selection for increased marbling in Angus cattle is being driven mainly by economics. Grid based pricing dominates the fed cattle market, and strong premiums for CAB, Prime, and various other branded programs reward high marbling carcasses. Modern EPDs, genomic tools, and selection indexes make identifying high marbling genetics easier and more reliable. Additionally, marbling can be improved without sacrificing other key traits. Because marbling increases carcass value without raising production costs, producers are strongly incentivized to select for it.

2. What positive outcomes is this trend producing for the Angus breed and the beef industry?

Miller – “The first and perhaps most important outcome has been ‘righting the ship’ with beef demand because of a more

Top Dollar Angus continued on the next page

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Top Dollar Angus *continued from the previous page*

consistent taste and eating experience. With high levels of marbling, the opportunity for additional premiums associated with Prime and CAB offers more income on fewer head at the producer level.”

Bertelsen – “Improved consumer demand is the biggest positive outcome for the industry. Marbling drives taste, which drives value. Beef has always been the highest priced protein in the meat case. Now with higher quality, we are worth it! Increased marbling has significantly improved consumer eating experiences, and they are willing to pay for it.”

“The industry made vast improvements in quality grade over the past 30 years. Most cattle feeders expected this would decrease the rewards (or premiums) for superior quality grade on value based grids. In fact, we are seeing LARGER rewards for Prime, CAB, and Choice [versus Select], further evidence that our improved product has met with greater consumer demand.”

Vandiver – “There are several positives, including larger premiums for fed cattle. More carcasses grading Upper $\frac{2}{3}$ Choice and Prime mean more income for cattle feeders like me. That helps our bottom line and incentivizes us to invest in quality genetics when we buy feeder cattle.”

“Another plus is improved consumer satisfaction. Better marbling generally improves tenderness, juiciness, and flavor, which gives consumers the eating experience they want. It also helps beef

compete against pork, chicken, and other proteins. Those factors help make beef more profitable from pasture to plate.”

Hinkle – “Ongoing expansion in demand for our product is based on quality [marbling] and has resulted in larger premiums collected by feeders and ranchers. This is a key reason the Angus name is so recognizable both domestically and worldwide.”

Nordhausen – “The most positive outcome of this trend is producing a more consistent, high quality product for beef consumers. They responded by elevating beef demand to unprecedented levels.”

“For the breed, the biggest positive outcome is more carcasses grading Upper $\frac{2}{3}$ Choice and Prime and being rewarded with larger grid premiums. Also, the Angus name is associated with quality in the consumer’s mind. When they think of quality beef, they think of Angus.”

Stevenson – “The beef industry is experiencing better demand based on the increased demand for Prime and Upper $\frac{2}{3}$ Choice beef. Historically, the industry assumed that access to more highly marbled beef would mean decreased prices for that product. Yet we are seeing something different in the market during recent years. Greater availability of Prime and Upper $\frac{2}{3}$ Choice beef has allowed more consumers to try the higher end product. Consumers like it and are willing to spend more to buy it. This phenomenon has increased demand across the entire beef industry.”

“For the seedstock segment and the Angus breed, this change has been very positive, because Angus genetics offer the best option to increase marbling and quality grade.”

Question 2 Summary – Increased marbling has improved beef demand by creating a more consistent, higher quality eating experience. More cattle now grade Upper $\frac{2}{3}$ Choice and Prime, leading to larger premiums for feeders and producers. Higher quality has strengthened consumer satisfaction, boosted consumer willingness to pay higher prices, and helped beef compete with other proteins. For the Angus breed, the shift has enhanced its reputation as the leading source of high quality, highly marbled beef, resulting in better grading carcasses and reinforcing the Angus name as being synonymous with quality.

3. What are the potential negatives?

Stevenson – “One potential negative is too much emphasis on one trait, which results in less emphasis on something else that is important. To avoid this problem, select for increased marbling, but make sure selection pressure is maintained on fertility, structure, efficiency, and longevity in the cow herd.”

Cobb – “Single trait selection must be avoided because it has potential to create unintended consequences. For example, muscle mass and feed efficiency may suffer.”

Nordhausen – “Single trait selection is never a good choice when making breeding decisions. Are we losing weaning weight, fertility, and longevity in the Angus breed? We are feeding cattle longer and pushing them harder than ever. When do we start losing efficiency?



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When do we start getting too much fat on cattle, externally, seam fat wise, and KPH fat? Have we created more congestive heart failures with feeding practices, feed additives, and genetics? All this is yet to be determined.”

Vandiver – “Over selection risk. Focusing too narrowly on marbling can unintentionally reduce attention to other important traits, like fertility, structural soundness, maternal ability, and overall performance. While marbling adds value, we have to balance it with overall efficiency and the production of sound cattle.”

Miller – “The potential for negatives is a paramount risk, IF we follow the path of single trait selection. An antagonism with growth and other traits is possible. Thus, a multi-trait approach to genetic improvement is a must. Growth performance and carcass weight are important to profitability. For future success, muscle in combination with marbling is required to avoid reductions in productivity and efficiency.”

Hinkle – “We must continue to achieve progress in marbling without sacrificing fertility and functionality. Doing so is very important. We cannot get caught up in single trait selection.”

Bertelsen – “None, if we’re careful. Even though marbling is not negatively correlated with other traits, many traits impact profitability for ranchers, backgrounders, and feeders. We need to stay balanced in genetic selection.”

“High marbling genetics with low growth still limit total dollar value per head. Likewise, feeder cattle with high marbling genetics that die in the feedyard are a significant loss. Cows must consistently breed back for ranchers to be profitable. We can improve all of those traits, and more, with disciplined genetic selection. Even lines of ‘maternal’ cattle can have superior marbling genetics, if we work at it.”

“Using a bull in the top 1 percent for marbling will change your genetics the fastest. However, simply using bulls that have higher marbling EPDs than what you’ve used in the past will allow ranchers to make progress.”

Question 3 Summary – Over selecting for marbling can create problems and lead to unintended consequences. Focusing too narrowly on marbling may reduce attention to key traits like fertility, growth, muscle, structural soundness, efficiency, and longevity. While marbling itself isn’t strongly antagonistic to other traits, failing to maintain balanced, multi-trait selection can erode overall herd performance and profitability.

4. What important uses/applications do you foresee for elite marbling Angus genetics?

Hinkle – “One important use is the positive impact high marbling Angus bulls can make on cowherds with no valuable carcass traits in their genetics. The single generation improvement of doing this is amazing.”

Vandiver – “Crossbreeding to improve carcass value is one logical application. Even outside straightbred Angus females, high marbling genetics can be used to boost carcass quality in commercial cow herds.”

Bertelsen – “If a producer needs to do a marbling ‘catch up,’ the tools are available to do so more rapidly than ever before. The American Angus Association’s database includes live animal

phenotypes, ultrasound scan data, plus carcass and DNA records. Said simply, EPDs work. We have plenty of data to show the strong correlation between sire carcass EPDs and the actual carcass data and grid performance of their progeny. Using a bull with a Marbling EPD in the top 25 percent of the breed will help ranchers make rapid improvements in just one generation, especially if that sire has high accuracy values.”

Stevenson – “There are high marbling Angus genetics that will work well in lower input production systems. We need to continue to identify and propagate those genetics.”

Cobb – “Increased qualification for Prime and CAB provides the opportunity to develop supply chain partnerships with packers and retailers. Producers who have known and predictable genetics will be able to participate in and take advantage of these opportunities and capture a larger share of beef’s retail value. As demand for high quality beef grows, these supply chain partnerships will increase. As marbling increases, we can add value and reduce market risk without changing the production system.”

Miller – “There exists the opportunity for smaller processors to enter the marketplace with a guaranteed, high quality product where all aspects of production and processing are validated to satisfy consumers.”

“A more sustainable system without the waste of reduced efficiency is possible with genetics for attaining high quality grades at a lighter carcass weight and younger age with efficient use of limited resources like irrigation water for grain. Efficiency throughout the production chain has not been adequately addressed to date.”

Question 4 Summary – Elite marbling Angus genetics can be used to rapidly improve carcass quality in average and low marbling herds, support branded beef and supply chain programs, fit low input systems, and help processors deliver consistent premium beef. They also offer potential for more sustainable production by achieving high quality grades efficiently at lighter carcass weights, less external fat, and younger harvest ages.

5. What will the future bring for marbling in the Angus breed? Implications for the industry?

Nordhausen – “The future of the Angus breed will include active competition for increased marbling. The superior beef product we are producing will continue to help grow demand and bring in new consumers, because of its palatability and taste. Will the tenderness conversation ever come back again, or is that a non-starter, because of our marbling emphasis over the years? Hard to say.”

“As breeders, can we produce cattle that gain more with less feed, have less back fat and less KPH fat, yet with increased intramuscular fat [marbling]? That would be the next summit to reach in the Angus breed. If this could be attained, it would have huge implications for every facet of the food chain”.

Cobb – “The Angus breed has the database and analytical architecture in place to further accelerate its progress. By using technological advances, we can become more precise in our genetic

Top Dollar Angus continued from the previous page

selection.”

“We will likely divide the Prime quality grade into high and low categories to create yet another value added layer of opportunity. We will see many cattle producers align with a production strategy that fits their environment. Procurement strategies will reward high quality producers that have known and predictable cattle. This, in turn, allows for a better alignment between genetics, management, and marketing all the way to the consumer.”

Miller – “There will continue to be a big role for Angus genetics in both straightbred and crossbred production systems. However, the future could bring a ‘haves and have nots’ sort, regarding the seedstock offered for sale. This is actually inevitable, as producers are paid for the true value of their animals and not on traditional preferences and wide ranging rhetoric on what is important. There will be greater premiums and discounts on cattle at all market levels, reflecting beef value differences at retail and in restaurants. More pull through demand for the better cattle and less ‘push whatever is being raised’ through the system, like we see today.”

Hinkle – “There is no limit on where we can take marbling levels in the Angus breed and therefore the beef industry. We have all the tools at our fingertips. But we must stay disciplined in our genetic selection and not sacrifice the great Angus cow along the way. We can actually accomplish this now, and there is no reason to wait.”

“There are many people who have never had the great eating experience that comes from a high quality steak. It should be our goal to bring those people in. The more consumers we bring to our side, the better the beef business will become.”

Stevenson – “My prediction is continued increasing demand for high marbling beef, both in our domestic market and for export. As more consumers have an opportunity to try very high quality beef, demand will continue to grow. At some point we could produce cattle with more marbling than is needed. We could produce enough high-marbling cattle to fully supply the demand. However, we are still a long way from that point.”

Bertelsen – “The financial rewards for marbling are here to stay. The beef industry suffered a significant loss of consumer demand during the 1980s and 1990s. The focus at that time was on lean, low fat beef production. Since 1997, marbling and consumer demand have increased. Pork and poultry do not have quality grades like beef. As a result, beef has captured a larger share of consumer expenditures on meat.”

“Currently, fed cattle with high marbling genetics have more flexibility in marketing (wider marketing window). When quality rewards are high on the grid, feeders can add days on feed to increase carcass weight and improve carcass price, which is highly affected by marbling. That lets the cattle do what they were genetically designed to accomplish. However, if feed costs are high or quality rewards are seasonally lower, or if feeders fear the market will soften, they could choose to market their cattle earlier and still achieve very acceptable quality grades compared to the industry average.”

“The development of improved red meat yield technology as

a replacement for the current Yield Grade system will significantly improve the industry’s ability to assess cutability. This will provide significant opportunity to improve overall muscling, prevent excessive backfat and still maintain marbling.”

Question 5 Summary – Marbling in the Angus breed will keep increasing as demand for high quality beef keeps growing. Genetic tools will make selection efforts more precise, creating larger price differences between top end and bottom end cattle. The industry may add new premium tiers, reward predictable high marbling genetics, and see stronger alignment between genetics, management, and marketing. The challenge will be boosting marbling while maintaining efficiency, fertility, and cow functionality.

The Future of Angus Marbling 2.0 and Industry Implications

1. Marbling Will Continue to Be a Central Focus – Our experts believe that demand for highly marbled beef — domestic and export — will keep growing. The Angus breed is well positioned to help meet that demand. The industry is still far from producing ‘too much’ marbling, mainly because there are plenty of low end cattle that need improvement and more consumers that need to experience high quality beef.

2. Genetic Progress Will Accelerate – With more high marbling sires, strong databases, and advanced genomic tools, breeders will become more precise and successful in selecting for marbling. Elite marbling Angus breeding stock are a genetic game changer by enabling faster progress than ever before in history. Any breeder, whether seedstock or commercial, large or small, that desires better marbling genetics can move their cattle way up the bell curve in a single generation.

3. Market Differentiation Will Intensify – As carcass value becomes more transparent, the industry will see a distinct divide between high value and low value genetics. Premiums and discounts will widen, rewarding cattle that truly perform on the rail and penalizing those that do not.

4. Greater Alignment Across the Supply Chain – Producers, feeders, and packers will increasingly coordinate their efforts around predictable, high quality cattle. Procurement strategies will favor known, high end genetics, and quality grades may subdivide further — e.g., high Prime vs. low Prime — to capture even more value.

5. Protecting the Angus Cow Remains Essential – While marbling potential is virtually unlimited, breeders must avoid

Test Cow and Her Three Progeny by a Top 3% Marbling EPD Angus Sire		
	Igenity Beef Marbling Score	Industry Rank
Cow	4	Below Average
Calf 1	8	Well Above Average
Calf 2	8	Well Above Average
Calf 3	8	Well Above Average

sacrificing maternal traits. The experts believe it is possible to improve marbling without compromising cow functionality — but doing so requires disciplined breeding programs.

6. Strong Economic Incentives Will Persist – Marbling driven premiums are expected to remain a major profit driver. High marbling cattle offer marketing flexibility — cattle feeders can sell early or feed them longer depending on market conditions, and still achieve strong quality grades.

Note – *Items 7 and 8 were not specifically discussed by our contributing experts. However, these trends are already in place and are worth briefly describing here. Item 9 further explains the likely result as breeders pursue multi-trait selection coupled with the pursuit of high marbling genetics.*

7. Elite Marbling Sires Used in Beef x Dairy Cattle – Many high marbling Angus and Angus based sires are already being utilized to make superior beef x dairy cattle. More of this is expected in the years ahead. Beef x dairy cattle are almost entirely the product of artificial insemination. With only minor differences in semen cost between the best and average sires, a growing number of dairy producers will use elite Angus/Angus based sires to enhance the value of their beef x dairy calves.

8. Angus Marbling 2.0 to Impact Other Breeds – Multiple other beef breeds routinely incorporate Angus genetics into their registered seedstock. Examples include, but are not limited to, Red Angus, Brangus, SimAngus, Balancer, and LimFlex. Such genetic acquisition efforts will continue, possibly even accelerate. These breeds can also benefit from improved marbling ability. Therefore, many of the Angus sires they select will include those with ultra high Marbling EPDs. Breeders will discover they can quickly shift their populations by tapping into Angus Marbling 2.0.

9. Elite Marbling Angus Re-packaged with Greater Overall Balance – Critics may suggest that elite marbling Angus are not adequately balanced with other important EPD and non-EPD traits. This criticism is both valid and not valid at the same time. Some high marbling Angus sires and sire lines are relatively well balanced for a large number of economically important traits. Others need improvement.

Going forward, Angus breeders will work diligently to create large numbers of elite marbling, well balanced seedstock. This process has no finish line. However, progress is made easier in the Angus Marbling 2.0 era, because of the ability to mate balanced trait Angus females to ultra high marbling sire lines and capture the best of both worlds.

Conclusion – The future of marbling in the Angus breed includes further genetic gains, greater mating precision, and continued strong economic rewards. As genetic tools improve and consumer demand for premium beef grows further, the beef industry will become more differentiated, more aligned, and more focused on producing cattle that combine exceptional eating quality with performance, efficiency, and functionality.

Elite marbling sires will drive continued genetic progress in the Angus breed and throughout the industry. Their ability to dramatically elevate marbling in average and below average commercial herds will be more widely leveraged, reducing the number of low value cattle

entering U.S. packing plants and raising overall beef quality.

Appendix – What happens when a Top 3 percent Angus Marbling EPD bull is mated to a cow with poor marbling genetics? Progeny marbling potential should significantly improve, correct? Yes, and that is exactly what happened in a recent case study conducted by Top Dollar Angus.

A Continental breed cow was DNA tested with Igenity Beef. She scored only 4 out of 10 for marbling. Igenity Beef uses a 1-10 reporting system, with higher scores indicating better genetics for the measured trait. The industry average marbling score is 5–5.5 out of 10. Therefore, a score of 4 is below the mean of the U.S. cattle population.

We mated this low-marbling female several times with a Top 3 percent Marbling EPD Angus bull. Our objective was to measure the improvement in progeny marbling genetics.

Three half blood Angus calves were eventually produced, and each calf was tested with Igenity Beef. As presented in the table below, all three calves sired by the high marbling Angus bull showed much improved marbling potential, scoring 8 of 10.

The takeaway from this small scale study is precisely what our contributing experts predicted. Elite marbling Angus genetics can produce tremendous genetic advancement in one generation. Low marbling cattle are leap frogged ahead, with their progeny landing well above industry average. That is the power of Angus Marbling 2.0.



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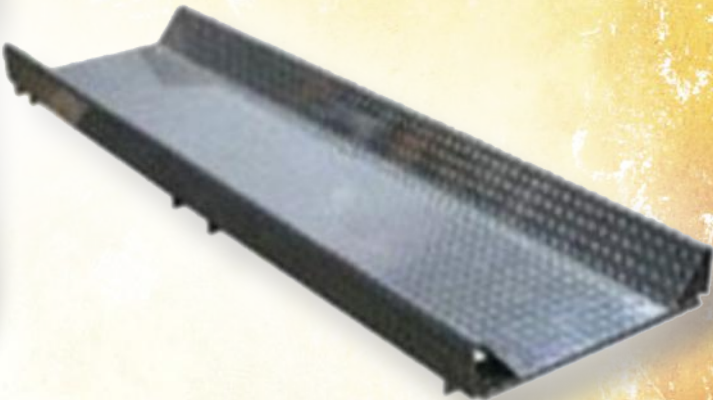
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GOVERNOR

BEEF MONTH

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, according to the 2025 North Carolina Agricultural Statistics Book published by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, there are currently over 720,000 cattle in North Carolina that provide a variety of food, leather, and other products to the citizens of this State; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2025 North Carolina Agricultural Statistics Book published by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, North Carolina farmers raise cattle in all 100 counties; and

WHEREAS, because of cooperation between beef producers and the North Carolina Cattlemen’s Association, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and allied industry, thousands of farms are flourishing across the State; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2025 North Carolina Agricultural Statistics Book published by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, beef and beef products are naturally nutrient rich, providing Americans with a high quality source of protein, zinc, iron, and B vitamins, leading nine out of ten households to serve beef at least once every two weeks; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2025 North Carolina Agricultural Statistics Book published by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, cattle farms generate more than \$481 million in cash receipts each year making the beef industry yet another part of the total diversification of agriculture in this state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Josh Stein, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim May 2026, as “**BEEF MONTH**” in North Carolina and commend this observance to all our citizens.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this thirtieth day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.

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American Highland Cattle Association taps Curious Plot to help position the breed and association for sustainable growth. The American Highland Cattle Association (AHCA) and Curious Plot are teaming up to reshape the image of the popular and growing heritage beef breed. American Highland is a breed known for its resilience, maternal instincts, and beef quality, making these cattle low maintenance and profitable for both purebred and crossbreeding programs. AHCA enlisted Curious Plot to spread the word to business minded cattlemen and women who value herd temperament, high quality lean beef yield, and unique marketing opportunities.

The popularity of American Highland cattle on social media may make some people think they belong more in a petting zoo than in a profitable beef operation. But underneath the distinctive long hair and iconic horns is a docile, hardworking animal with exceptional maternal instincts, high calving ease, hardiness, longevity, and superior foraging ability, which produces high quality, lean beef.

“We are not a novelty breed. We are a working beef breed. Strong in heritage, growing in numbers, and trusted by a new generation of cattle producers,” said American Highland President Diane Clark. “This is beef that earns its place on the plate. Highland beef delivers a healthier, elite alternative that today’s discerning consumers are demanding.”

With more than 2,200 members and 70,000+ registered head in the herdbook, AHCA is one of the fastest-growing breed associations in the U.S. — and is just getting started.

“American Highland is a professional beef breed association for cattlemen and women looking for a profitable and growing beef breed, regardless of farm size or business model,” said Clark. “Our mission is to grow the category and position the breed as an elite beef breed in the cattle industry. This breed has a bold future — and we’re ready to lead it forward.”

Indeed, American Highlands are more than a striking silhouette in the pasture or a petting zoo novelty. American Highlands’ ability to thrive in harsh climates, utilize rough forage, and reduce feed costs provides economic and sustainability advantages for producers who are looking for low maintenance, high longevity cows suitable for a variety of environments, from cold and rugged highlands in the Mountain West and New England to Southwestern desert climates with sparse forage and warm, lush pastures of the Southeast.

“We have faced some difficult communication challenges with clients in food, agriculture, and companion animal health, but this one is really hairy,” said Curious Plot CEO Laurie Fleck. “The viral social media trend portraying the breed as cuddly comfort animals is sending the wrong message to beef producers and consumers. Correcting that misperception is a challenge we are excited to tackle.”

Adding to the challenge is confusion between American Highland Cattle and miniature Highlands. Typical American Highland cattle are full size animals, generally ranging from frame scores of 2 to 5. By contrast, so-called “mini” cattle are intentionally bred to be smaller, often through selective breeding or crossbreeding with cattle carrying dwarf genetics. Standard American Highlands are the recognized, traditional heritage breed used in beef and production



settings; the Mini Highland is not a recognized beef breed.

American Highland beef represents a healthier, premium alternative for consumers and a profitable opportunity for cattle producers. American Highland beef’s flavor profile, marbling, and tenderness are valued in direct-to-consumer and grassfed markets: naturally lean, distinctively clean tasting, and raised with purpose. Highland beef delivers a healthier, elite alternative that today’s discerning consumers are demanding.

“The future of the U.S. beef industry lies in more diverse production models to meet the needs of today’s producers and consumers,” said Fleck. “American Highlands are well positioned for the future, and we are proud to help tell the story and promote continued growth.”

About the American Highland Cattle Association. AHCA is the official U.S. breed association dedicated to growing and protecting the American Highland cattle breed. Representing more than 2,200 members and over 70,000 registered head, AHCA is one of the fastest growing beef breed organizations in the country. The association supports business minded cattlemen and women across diverse production models, promoting American Highland cattle as a profitable, resilient, and high quality heritage beef breed. Through advocacy, education, and breed stewardship, AHCA is working to position American Highland as an elite breed for the future of the U.S. beef industry.

About Curious Plot. Curious Plot is a marketing, communications, and consulting agency that represents clients in the food, agriculture, and companion animal care sectors. With a shared purpose of “We Believe in Better,” the agency’s 120+ team members deliver services including go-to-market strategy, public relations, creative, branding, social, digital, and media. With headquarters in Minneapolis, Curious Plot team members are in 20 states coast-to-coast. Learn more at CuriousPlot.agency.

Herdbook Tutorials Now Available. A new resource is now available to support members in navigating Herdbook. Recently added to the ASA website, Herdbook tutorials offer step-by-step guidance on a variety of topics, from animal registration to ownership transfers. Additional tutorials will continue to be added throughout the year, ensuring members have access to the most up-to-date information and support. View them now by visiting simmental.org and clicking on 'Herdbook Tutorials' under the Membership tab.

\$API and \$TI Update Notice. As of April 13, IGS implemented an adjustment to the coding that categorizes animals' breeds for the calculation of \$API and \$TI. A small portion of animals in the Simmental database will experience a slight, positive change in their index values. \$API and \$TI remain the most effective genetic selection tools for predicting genetic merit for overall profitability. Members with questions about the update or specific animals are welcome to contact Dr. Elizabeth Dressler, ASA Lead Geneticist.

Fall calving herds – it's that time of year! Your summer projects are in full swing, and so is the 2026 Fall THE Enrollment season. Don't forget to use the best tool available to maximize the results of your hard work by enrolling all your dams in Total Herd Enrollment (THE).

Submit your inventory:

- Early — *by June 15, 2026*
- Accurately — *don't pay for dams that are gone; make sure all*



AMERICAN Simmental ASSOCIATION NEWS

new heifers and purchased cows are listed to ensure complete dam records

You must submit an updated inventory to benefit from our early enrollment rates. Even if you don't think there are any changes to your herd, review the list and submit your inventory today!

- Fall THE is for cows that calve July 1–December 31.
- Fall Early Enrollment is April 15–June 15.
- Fall Late Enrollment is June 16–August 15 — *incurs \$1.00 late fee per dam*

Don't delay, enroll today!

Sire Source 2026 Available Online. We are excited to release the 2026 Sire Source as a resource to help facilitate genetic

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Brooke Harward, Executive Secretary
Anna English, President

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decisions in your operations! This year's edition highlights 134 sires from members around the country. All sires included have genomically enhanced EPDs that are directly comparable and are backed by the International Genetic Solutions Multi-breed Genetic Evaluation. Throughout the sire directory, numerous educational articles highlight various topics, including understanding EPD, interpreting percentile ranks, new trait development, and available ASA programs.

About the American Simmental Association. Founded in 1968, the American Simmental Association is headquartered in Bozeman, Montana. ASA is committed to leveraging technology, education, and collaboration to accelerate genetic profitability for the beef industry. In keeping with its commitment, ASA and its partners formed International Genetic Solutions — the world's largest genetic evaluation of beef cattle. Learn more at www.simmental.org.

NC BEEF CATTLE

IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

2026 N.C. BCIP Bull Test Consignments. The N.C. BCIP Bull Test Program had a great year in 2025, and we anticipate good demand for quality genetics in the coming year. This is an exciting time for fall calving seedstock producers. Bull calves are being weaned, processed, and evaluated for their value as breeding cattle. The N.C. BCIP Bull Test Program offers producers the opportunity to evaluate their cattle for post weaning performance. Now is the time to review the 2026 rules and regulations for this program to determine if your cattle would meet the requirements.

The 2026 bull testing schedule will be posted online soon. Study it carefully to make sure your bulls are on schedule to meet testing regulations. Please refer to the NCSU Beef Portal for updates.

Bulls will need to have an 840 HDX electronic identification (EID) tag when they are delivered to the bull test. Bull development costs will be higher this year due to commodity markets and rising input costs. N.C. BCIP will make every effort to control costs without affecting bull performance.

Nomination forms will be mailed upon request or are available online, along with the 2026 schedule, at <https://beef.ces.ncsu.edu/beef-bull-test/>. If you wish to consign a bull(s) to the Butner Bull Test and/or the Waynesville Bull Test and have not received the information, please contact your county extension livestock agent or call Johnny Rogers at 336-504-7268 to request the information.

We look forward to working with you and having another successful season in 2026.



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WAGYU

AMERICAN WAGYU ASSOCIATION

UPDATE

A **WA Transitions to Helical.** The AWA is excited to announce the upcoming transition of our registration platform from DigitalBeef/701X to Helical, with an anticipated launch date of June 1. This transition will create a more seamless, efficient experience for our members while enhancing our data capabilities and functionality.

The Helical system is just a move to a different registry system — no internal changes will be made to the EPDs. This is not a change to Australia; we are just going to use the same system that they use to input our data. The data itself and rules surrounding registering and recording animals will not change.

Helical is an independent genetics operating system and breed registry platform used by livestock organizations globally to manage genomic, pedigree, and performance data for beef, dairy, and sheep. Founded in 2021, it acts as a “one-stop-shop” to improve efficiency in registration, DNA testing, and data analysis, with specialized features for managing large scale genetic datasets in over 40 countries.

This system is only going to change the look of the registry system.

Registered animals, their EPDs and the costs related should not change.

In addition to improving the member experience, this transition will also strengthen office operations and productivity, allowing our team to serve you more effectively. Stay tuned for more information as we prepare for this exciting transition!

Welcome us **HOME to Oklahoma!** The decision to relocate the American Wagyu Association (AWA) was not just about geography but more about identity, opportunity, and the future of the AWA. Moving from Idaho to the Stockyards City district of Oklahoma City represents more than a change of address; it signals a strategic shift toward the very center of America’s cattle industry.

For years, the Pacific Northwest provided a logical home for the AWA. The efforts from the many dedicated individuals from our association’s early days shaped our core values and built a resilient network of members. However, as the beef industry evolves, the need to position our association in a more visible location has become increasingly clear.

Oklahoma City offers opportunities for growth of the AWA and for the Wagyu breed. Known widely as the “heart of cow country,” Oklahoma City is one of the most influential cattle and livestock centers in the United States. The city is home to major stockyards, industry organizations, and a steady flow of cattlemen, both buyers and sellers.

Our new location is within the historic Stockyards City district, positioned right on Exchange Avenue. Hundreds of cattlemen bypass our office daily, all noticing our Wagyu logo on the front of our building. The rhythm of the cattle trade is just across the parking lot. In addition, members gain closer access to the association headquarters, allowing for increased contact and collaboration with





AWA Transitions To Helical!



June 1, 2026

Stay tuned for more information!





AWA staff. With our open door policy, members are encouraged to stop in and visit the office. We are strategically located where three interstate highways converge, with untapped visibility.

With that, transitions come with challenges. There is a deep sense of heritage tied to our time in Idaho, and leaving that behind is not without emotion. Longstanding members may feel a sense of displacement, and adapting to a new location may take time. But the spirit of the Wagyu community has always been rooted in resilience and forward thinking. This move honors that spirit by embracing growth while carrying forward the traditions that define us.

Ultimately, this relocation is about ensuring long term

sustainability for the AWA and its members. By planting roots in a location synonymous with beef production and trade, we position ourselves for greater visibility and continued success in an ever changing agricultural landscape.

The move from Idaho to Oklahoma City marks both an ending and a beginning. It's a tribute to where we've been and a bold step toward where we're going, right into the heart of cow country.

About the American Wagyu Association. *The American Wagyu Association, Inc. was incorporated in Texas on March 14, 1990, and serves to register Wagyu and promote the breed throughout the U.S., Canada, and other countries. The Association headquarters is located at the University of Idaho Research Park, Post Falls, Idaho. The American Wagyu Association has a vibrant membership base that continues to promote and develop the Wagyu influence in America and worldwide.*

The opportunities Wagyu beef can offer are endless. Wagyu genetics cater to producers targeting the high end restaurant trade with highly marbled beef to the seedstock producer, supplying the cow/calf producers with a crossbred alternative that will offer calving ease and premium carcass quality in a single cross, which no other beef breed can.

Wagyu has a vital role to play in today's beef industry, increasing the quality of red meat produced that health conscious consumer demand.

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American SHORTHORN ASSOCIATION UPDATE

American Shorthorn Association Partners with Simplot's Land and Livestock Division on Groundbreaking BCHF Research Initiative.

The American Shorthorn Association (ASA) is proud to announce a collaborative research effort with Simplot's Land and Livestock division, focused on better understanding and reducing the risk of Bovine Congestive Heart Failure (BCHF) — an emerging challenge impacting cattle performance, feedlot profitability, and animal welfare across the U.S. beef industry.

BCHF — sometimes referred to as “late stage heart failure” — has become a growing concern in modern cattle feeding systems. Industry data suggests that approximately 4–5 percent of fed cattle can be affected by severe cardiac issues at harvest, contributing to death loss and reduced efficiency. As cattle are bred for increased growth, performance, and carcass value, understanding and managing this risk has become increasingly important.

Through this partnership, the ASA and Simplot's Land and Livestock division have evaluated approximately 10,000 Shorthorn-influenced animals within one of the largest and most comprehensive BCHF genomic databases in the world. Simplot's Land and Livestock division's dataset includes over 35,000 animals with detailed phenotypic measurements — such as heart and lung scores — paired with genomic information, making it a leading resource for studying this condition.

Encouraging Results for the Shorthorn Breed — Initial findings from the project are very encouraging for Shorthorn breeders and commercial users of Shorthorn genetics. Based on genomic predictions developed through Simplot's advanced evaluation system, Shorthorn cattle appear to present a lower relative risk for BCHF compared to some other segments of the industry.

These predictions are derived from newly developed Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) specifically designed to estimate genetic risk for BCHF. While early results are positive, it is important to note that Shorthorn cattle currently share fewer common genetic markers associated with BCHF risk that have been identified in other breeds. As a result, prediction accuracy for Shorthorns will continue to improve as additional data — particularly direct heart evaluations at harvest — are incorporated into the system.

“This is exactly the type of forward thinking research that benefits both our membership and the commercial cattle industry,”

said Montie Soules, Executive Secretary/CEO of the American Shorthorn Association. “The early indications that Shorthorn cattle may carry a lower genetic risk for BCHF are very positive. At the same time, we are committed to continuing this work to strengthen the accuracy of these tools and provide meaningful, science-based information to our breeders.”

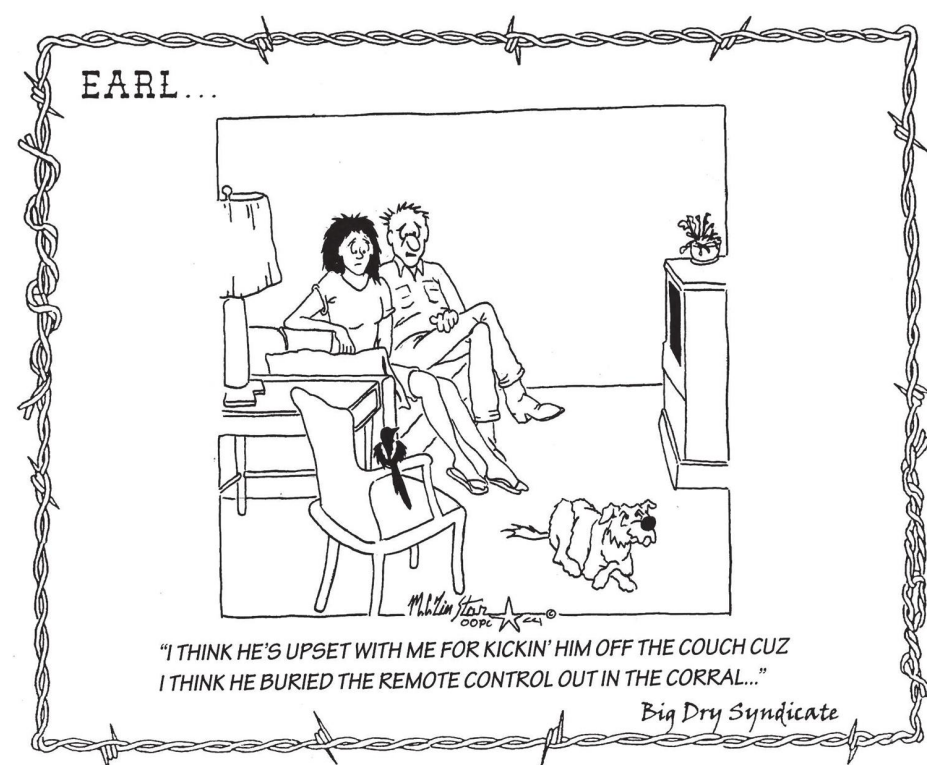
A Long Term Commitment to Genetic Improvement — The collaboration leverages Simplot's Land and Livestock division's multi-trait genomic evaluation model, which combines heart score and lung deflation score data to more accurately predict BCHF risk. This approach reflects the complex, multi-system nature of the condition and represents a significant advancement over earlier single-trait models.

Because BCHF has been shown to be moderately heritable, genomic tools such as these EPDs offer one of the most effective long term strategies for reducing risk through genetic selection.

Looking Ahead — Both ASA and Simplot emphasize that this is an ongoing research effort. As additional phenotypic data — particularly heart scores collected at harvest — are added to the dataset, the accuracy and reliability of BCHF EPDs for Shorthorn cattle will continue to improve.

This partnership represents an important step forward in understanding BCHF and reinforces the role of Shorthorn genetics as a balanced, efficient, and sustainable choice for today's beef industry.

About the American Shorthorn Association. The ASA, established in 1872 and recognized as the oldest beef breed association in the United States, continues to demonstrate leadership in adopting innovative technologies that benefit both seedstock and commercial producers. With more than 15,000 registrations annually, the association remains committed to advancing the value and acceptance of Shorthorn genetics across the beef industry. For more information, visit shorthorn.org.





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Congress Commemorates the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Both the House and Senate recently introduced resolutions supporting the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), sponsored by Senators Cynthia Lummis (R–Wyoming) and Ben Ray Luján (D–New Mexico) and Representatives Dan Newhouse (R–Washington) and Jim Costa (D–California). The Public Lands Council (PLC) supports these resolutions to honor the conservation work of ranchers, researchers, rangeland conservationists, and many more critical to maintaining millions of acres across the U.S. and the world.

“The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists is about celebrating everyone that dedicates their lives to keeping range and pasturelands healthy. U.S. cattle and sheep producers carry out voluntary conservation work every day to preserve our natural landscapes through targeted grazing,” said PLC Secretary and Colorado rancher Robbie LeValley. “The work we do as ranchers is made possible by a strong network of individuals that are as passionate about maintaining our treasured natural resources as we are. PLC thanks House and Senate leaders for introducing these resolutions and commemorating this important work in the congressional record.”

Background – The United Nations designated 2026 as the “International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists” to recognize the vital nature of rangelands and the significance of pastoralism to the stewardship and societal benefits of rangelands. Grazing on federal rangelands and grasslands is an essential tool that helps conserve and improve some of the West’s most iconic landscapes. Today, cattle and sheep graze on approximately 22,000 allotments that total nearly 250 million acres on Bureau of Land Management or U.S. Forest Service land. Ranchers are the backbone of the rural economy in the western United States, contributing to the national beef, lamb, and wool supply chains — collectively worth more than \$73 billion annually. Ranchers support other local businesses, return money to the land by investing in range improvements, and contribute to the tax base that funds schools, conservation work, and other important public services. Additionally, ranchers make the billions of dollars generated by recreation, timber production, and other industries possible by keeping our public lands green, healthy, and undeveloped.

NCBA and PLC Participate in Grazing Roundtable, MOU Signing. Public lands ranchers recently joined U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum as the secretaries signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to launch their Grazing Action Plan.



NCBA and PLC leaders and members then participated in a roundtable discussing cooperative work to address longstanding challenges for federal lands grazing permittees. PLC President Tim Canterbury, PLC Past President Mark Roeber, and Industry Issues Committee Chairman Nate Thomson were joined by NCBA President-elect Kim Brackett, American National CattleWomen (ANCW) Past President Nikki Weston, Washington ranchers Stephanie and Nick Martinez, Arizona permittee Dan Bell, and Colorado rancher Nancy Roberts in raising critical ranching issues to be addressed.

“Public lands ranchers are resilient by nature, but we still need significant relief from the burdensome federal regulations that make it harder to do our jobs every day. This MOU will make it easier to ranch on public lands and will help improve the health of western landscapes,” said Tim Canterbury. “By speeding up the permitting process and expanding the use of targeted grazing, the federal government is ensuring that more ranchers will keep ranching and that rangelands will face less degradation and destruction from wildfires and mismanagement. PLC appreciates USDA and the Interior Department standing with livestock producers in the West and putting this MOU and grazing plan into action.”

The MOU outlines cooperation between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the Grazing Action Plan, released by USDA last year. This plan focuses on boosting rancher resiliency by assessing vacant allotments, unifying permitting frameworks between agencies, expanding the use of targeted grazing to prevent wildfires, and establishing a rancher liaison program for wildfire incident command centers.

“When you raise cattle on federal lands, it requires a great deal of work to sort through the government red tape. This plan will cut bureaucracy by streamlining the permitting process, expanding grazing access, and optimizing targeted grazing in areas that are the most vulnerable to wildfires,” said Kim Brackett. “This MOU will provide much needed regulatory relief to ranchers and make it easier for us to carry out the voluntary conservation essential to maintaining these working lands. NCBA thanks USDA and the Interior Department for listening to ranchers in the West and to advance much needed coordination between the agencies.”

About the Public Lands Council. PLC represents public lands ranchers in Washington, D.C. Since 1968, PLC has worked with Congress and the federal land management agencies to maintain a stable business environment in which livestock producers can conserve the West and feed the nation and world. Visit www.publiclandscouncil.org to learn more.

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Alamance	0	Cumberland	2	Johnston	5	Randolph	1
Alexander	4	Currituck	0	Jones	0	Richmond	1
Alleghany	1	Dare	0	Lee	3	Robeson	11
Anson	2	Davidson	1	Lenoir	0	Rockingham	2
Ashe	2	Davie	0	Lincoln	4	Rowan	4
Avery	0	Duplin	1	McDowell	3	Rutherford	18
Beaufort	0	Durham	0	Macon	6	Sampson	2
Bertie	0	Edgecombe	1	Martin	1	Scotland	0
Bladen	3	Forsyth	1	Madison	0	Stanly	1
Brunswick	0	Franklin	4	Mecklenburg	0	Stokes	2
Buncombe	23	Gaston	0	Mitchell	1	Surry	2
Burke	11	Gates	0	Montgomery	2	Swain	0
Cabarrus	1	Graham	0	Moore	2	Transylvania	1
Caldwell	2	Granville	10	Nash	6	Tyrrell	0
Camden	0	Greene	0	New Hanover	0	Union	3
Carteret	0	Guilford	0	Northampton	0	Vance	2
Caswell	1	Halifax	1	Onslow	0	Wake	0
Catawba	10	Harnett	0	Orange	0	Warren	0
Chatham	4	Haywood	12	Pamlico	2	Washington	0
Cherokee	0	Henderson	8	Pasquotank	0	Watauga	2
Chowan	0	Hertford	0	Pender	0	Wayne	3
Clay	0	Hoke	1	Perquimans	0	Wilkes	7
Cleveland	3	Hyde	0	Person	0	Wilson	5
Columbus	0	Iredell	4	Pitt	1	Yadkin	3
Craven	2	Jackson	1	Polk	0	Yancey	1

Grand Total 223

New NCCA Members for 2026

During the Membership Committee meeting at the 2007 N.C. Cattle Conference, members decided to list the name and county of residence of **NEW** NCCA members in *The Carolina Cattle Connection*. A new member is someone who has never been a member or has rejoined after a brief break in their membership.

Out-of-State

David Guinn – Tennessee

Alexander County

Morning Dew Farms

Alleghany County

Austin Phipps

Anson County

Maddie Carpenter – EBS Farms

Ashe County

Eric Dancy – Upper Mountain Research Station

Buncombe County

Crystal Belanger

Madison Calvert

Litzy Mundo Cienfuegos

Chelsea Grein

Grace Holloway

Haley McCall

Taylor Page

Emmy Robinson

Cynthia Thrush-Bennett

Victoria Vazquez

Alli White

Jade Wilson

Jeff Worley – Worley Livestock Farm

Taylor Wyatt

Burke County

Keith Bowman

Tess Bowman

Harvey Bradley

Josh Goins

Luke Harrill – Belle Farm

Trevor Martin

Jim Sitts

Chatham County

Rollo T. Varkey

Cleveland County

Jerry Yarbrow – Yarbrow Farm

Craven County

Keith McCoy – CJ Farm

Matt Paul – Paul Family Pastures Farm

Cumberland County

Marion Smith – Marion Smith Farms

Davidson County

Gerald Sink

Duplin County

Adam Baker – Baker Farms

Franklin County

Branden & April Lloyd – River Mountain Ranch

Dalton West – C&L West Family Farms

Granville County

Ben Adcock – Ben Adcock Farms

Joseph Dickerson – Umstead Research Station

Derek W. Dunlap – Umstead Beef Unit

Robert Hight – Harper Farms

Mackenzie Hutson - Umstead Beef Unit

Ryan Miller - Umstead Research Station

Bobby Ross - Umstead Research Station

Lyn Williams – Umstead Research Station

Haywood County

Tayte Anspach

Justin Best – Best Farms

Ava Flowers

Taylor Franklin

Jarrold Holt – Shelton Laurel Farm

Hannah Nile

Rylee Shoaf

Donna Smith

Henderson County

Daisy Gonzalez

Makenzy Johnson

Jessica Lyons

Katelyn Vaskovsky

Iredell County

Shane & Renee Hill

Michael Kuzio – MK Colt & Cattle Company

Johnston County

Michelle W. Baker – Faith 21
April & David Brewer
Gerald Stephenson
Jay Woodard – Woodard Farms

Lincoln County

Alan T. Mustian

Macon County

Ricky James – Osage Farms, Inc.

McDowell County

John Fisher – Fisher Farms
Paul Freeman – Freeman Fields Farm
Lily Prestwood

Montgomery County

Leonard Kern, Jr. & Benjamin Kern – Four Generations Farm FLP
Daylon Lisenby – VZL Farm

Nash County

Dolores Journigan – Journigan Farm
Kenzie Updyke – Sunset Cattle Company
Madison Updyke – Sunset Cattle Company

Randolph County

Zac Hand – Hand Grains & Livestock

Rockingham County

Michael Apple – Cross Creek Farm

Sampson County

Chasen Matthis – Chasecole Livestock

Transylvania County

Maya Rivas

Watauga County

Thomas Williams – Alice Springs Farm

Wayne County

Raphael Mitchell

Wilkes County

Jeremy Bullard – Bullard Farms
Austin Johnson – J&J Farms

Wilson County

Bradley Webb

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ronnie@hardrockbeefcattle.com

JK RED ANGUS

Jeff Banfield & Madison Adams
331 Tee Jay Farm Road | Aberdeen, NC
910-315-3821

LANGDON RED ANGUS & SIMMENTAL

John & Eileen Langdon
7728 Raleigh Road | Benson, NC
919-796-5010
johnlangdon5@gmail.com

ROGERS CATTLE COMPANY

Johnny & Sharon Rogers
945 Woodsdale Road | Roxboro, NC
336-504-7268
rccbeef@gmail.com

BULL HILL RANCH

Jim & Alvina Meeks
Raymond Prescott, Manager
1986 Trinity Church Road | Gray Court, SC
864-981-2080
bullhill2@prtcnet.com | bullhillredangus.com

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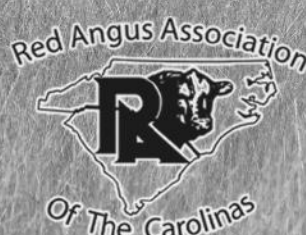
David Miller
316 Key Road | Edgefield, SC
706-840-3709

P & J FARMS

Andy Smith
7007 Sugar and Wine Road | Monroe, NC
704-400-3436



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Lifestock Launches Calf Start and Calf Recover to Improve Herd Health and Performance. Maintaining livestock health is essential to profitability, and two of the most critical windows occur at birth and during periods of high stress. Lifestock has developed two targeted products designed to help cattle producers manage these challenges and set their herds on a path to long term success.

Both products focus on supporting digestive health, an often overlooked but vital component of overall performance. Founder and developer Robo Hendrickson explains, “The gut is the engine of an animal’s productivity, and we’ve developed tools to keep that engine running at peak performance.”

Newborn calves are particularly vulnerable, entering the world with naïve immune systems and underdeveloped digestive tracts. Calf Start is a product formulated to support immune function, strengthen gut defenses, and promote a healthy microbiome. It is the only product of its kind to combine egg derived natural antibodies, probiotics that help establish the microbiome, and fat soluble vitamins A, D, and E. Calf Start also delivers seven targeted antibodies that help defend against common pathogens. This includes *E. coli*. For added flexibility, it is available as a single dose tube administered at birth or in a powder form for use with milk replacer.

Lifestock’s second product, Calf Recover, is designed to support calves during high stress periods such as digestive disease, sickness, weaning, and transportation. Stress can suppress appetite and compromise immune function, often leading to illness and reduced performance. Calf Recover is formulated with a whopping 25 billion CFUs of probiotic combined with prebiotic, digestive enzymes, amino acids, and targeted antibodies that help restore gut health faster. The product is available in both paste and powder forms for convenience.

Hendrickson brings a diverse background in ranching, rodeo, and animal healthcare. His father Dale was a mixed animal practitioner for over 50 years. He has been involved in the pioneering development of digestive healthcare products for animals since 2011, primarily in the equine sector with FullBucket and 6666 Equine Supplements. With this new focus on cattle, Lifestock expands its commitment to improving animal health and producer profitability.

About Lifestock. LifeStock was developed by the same people that brought FullBucket and Four Sixes Equine Supplements to market. We use peer reviewed, scientifically tested ingredients designed for a specific purpose to help improve efficiency, reduce digestive issues and loss. You can learn more about the products and the history behind them at www.lifestockhealth.com.

Meet Your 2026 NCCA President

Please join us in welcoming Jim Ledford — the new president of the N.C. Cattlemen’s Association and the N.C. Cattlemen’s Beef Council — a dedicated leader committed to advancing our industry and serving cattle producers across the state.

“Hi, I’m Jim Ledford, and I have the privilege of serving as president of the N.C. Cattlemen’s Association and N.C. Cattlemen’s Beef Council for the coming year. I am a native of Macon County in the southwest corner of the state and have lived here all my life.

Growing up, my family raised cattle and hogs before going to only cattle in the late 1980s. Today, with my two sons and their families, we are a commercial cow/calf farm. We have six grandchildren, and they are active in the show ring with heifers and hogs.

It is an exciting time and yet also a challenging time in the beef industry. I look forward to getting to know many of you and representing you as North Carolina cattlemen.”





2026 Member Benefit PROGRAM

The N.C. Cattlemen's Association is excited to launch the Member Benefit Partner Program, connecting trusted businesses with cattle producers across North Carolina. Through this program, members receive exclusive discounts from industry partners.

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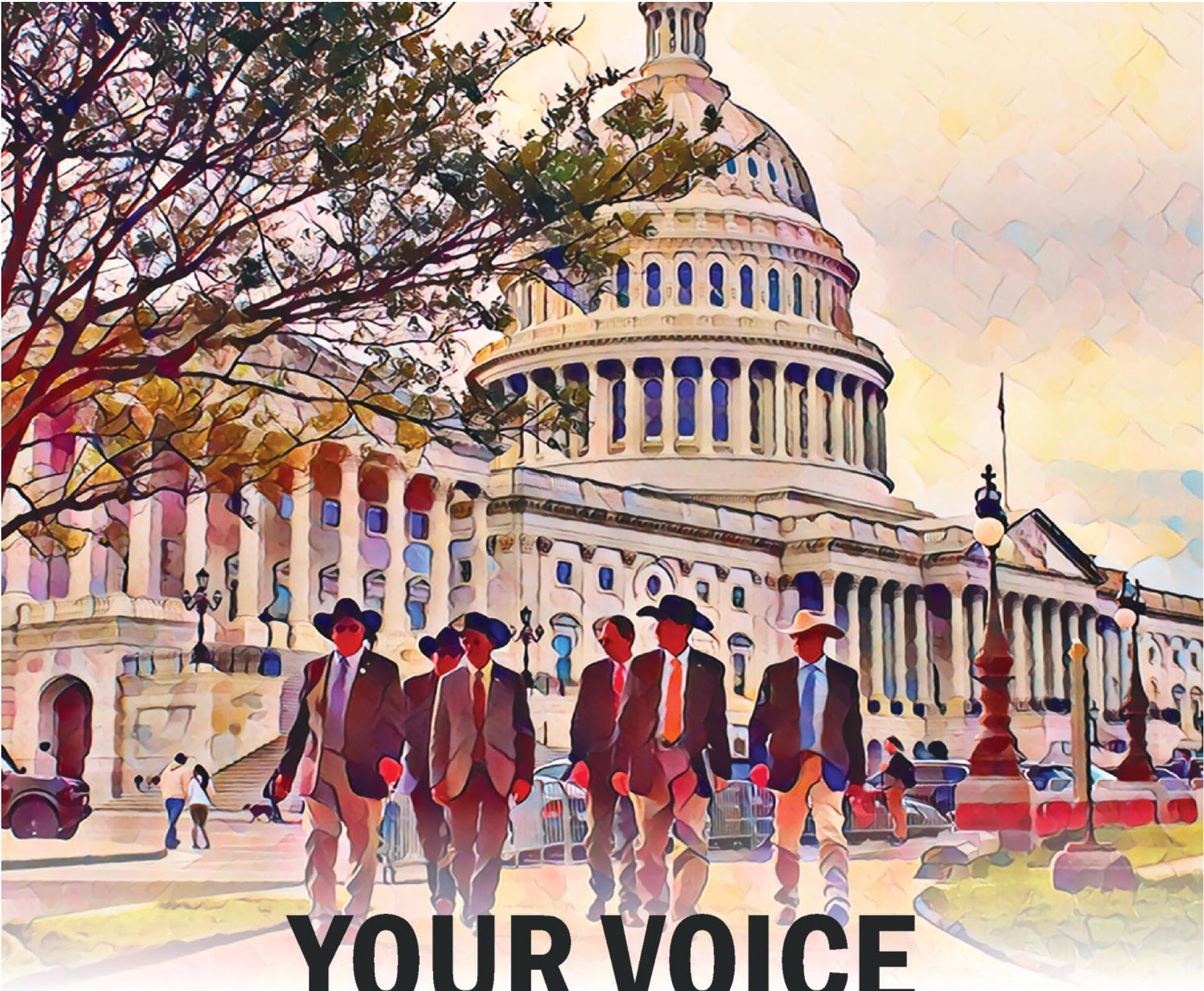


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2026 NCBA POLICY PRIORITIES

NCBA's policy focus for 2026 is to defend the free market, promote free trade, and reduce regulatory burdens to preserve opportunities for producer profitability and strong beef demand. There will be an increased focus on elevating and defending the voices of real cattle producers and grassroots membership driven policies.

- Continue to press the administration to roll back harmful regulations to keep working lands working.
- Enhance and strengthen U.S. mitigation measures against the incursion of New World Screwworm.
- Protect the U.S. cattle herd from foreign animal diseases and pests through heightened awareness and preparedness actions.
- Expand market access for U.S. beef exports and hold trade partners accountable to ensure equivalent animal health and food safety standards for imported beef.
- Promote science-based nutrition policies and sound, fact-based information for consumers.
- Push for further hours-of-service flexibility, increased truck weights, and continue delaying ELD requirements for livestock haulers.
- Safeguard the U.S. cattle and beef supply chain by working with the administration to ensure there is a strong workforce to limit processing disruptions for producers.

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A Message from the CEO

Roll 'Em Back

By COLIN WOODALL, *National Cattlemen's Beef Association*



Midterm election primaries are yielding interesting results. Runoffs, surprise retirements, and candidates pulling out of races illustrate how competitive and crazy this election cycle is. It's not surprising given the political climate, but if you are a member of the House of Representatives or part of the 1/3 of the U.S. Senate up for re-election, your focus is on winning your election.

While there is plenty of legislative business Congress should tend to, I don't expect them to get much more done this year because of their desire to be on the campaign trail. Once a plan is concocted to fund the rest of the government for this fiscal year, we will hear a lot of House and Senate rhetoric but will see very little action. Now, let's keep in mind that this is not a unique situation. A session of Congress lasts for two years. For quite some time, the first year of the session has been about legislating and the second year about running for re-election. When we have a favorable Congress, losing that second year takes away opportunities to advocate for NCBA's policy priorities. When it is a challenging Congress, however, it can help us stop a lot of bad ideas.

With this in mind, how do we continue to advocate for you? Well, campaign season allows us to put even more emphasis on rolling back overburdensome rules and regulations. Many federal rules can be changed without Congressional action, and President Trump has been a willing partner in helping ease the regulatory burden on agriculture. The Endangered Species Act, or ESA, is a great example of where we need improvement.

In late February, we delivered a delisting of the lesser prairie chicken. This means the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Northern and Southern Distinct Population Segments of the lesser prairie chicken from the list of endangered species. NCBA, the Public Lands Council (PLC), and our state partners in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico have spent countless hours pointing out the legal and scientific flaws that led to the lesser prairie chicken being listed. We were also able to clearly show that the lesser prairie chicken thrives where cattle graze on rangeland. Delistings are rare, so this is a significant victory for us and shows we can be successful in delisting species.

This win bolsters the long-standing effort NCBA and PLC have

put into addressing wolves and their impact on producers who are forced to deal with them thanks to federal government action and inaction. Over the years, NCBA and PLC have worked with our state partner organizations to support multiple delisting rules and engage in litigation defending the delisting decisions. We have shared the horrific stories and photos of cattle killed and maimed by wolves, in addition to describing the emotional and financial toll it takes on many of you. The Trump team has the ability to take action now, and we are providing them the support and cover they need to make the decision. Getting action on wolves leads the list of NCBA's regulatory rollback priorities.

Over at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we have a friend in Administrator Lee Zeldin. He has been firm in his resolve to slash regulations. His work to redefine the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) led to a proposal that protects producers from worrying about whether a ditch would be regulated. The WOTUS fight has been going on for more than a decade, so we are diligently working with the EPA to finalize this pro-agriculture definition.

In what was heralded as the "single largest deregulatory action in U.S. history," President Trump and Administrator Zeldin eliminated the 2009 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Endangerment Finding that drove so many of the U.S. government's environmental actions, especially changes to engine emission standards. This action resets climate discussion and will ease the economic burden caused by rules implemented under the finding.

I've just listed these few rules and regulations because the total list would fill my monthly article through election day. The point is that our work to implement the policy you pass as members never slows down. I don't know what exactly will happen on Election Day 2026. While time seems to fly by these days, it is a political lifetime between now and November, considering a short soundbite or video can change the course of any campaign. Regardless, we know the president will continue his deregulation work right up to his last day in office. We will be there to support him and keep him focused on our deregulation priorities. This may well be the best time we've had, or will ever have, in rolling back so much of the government burden you face.

NCBA President's Report

Laying the Groundwork

By GENE COPENHAVER, *National Cattlemen's Beef Association*



Over the last several years, our industry has worked tirelessly to strengthen the global reputation of U.S. beef, and today we're seeing the results of that effort in real time. Last month, I had the privilege of representing NCBA as we hosted a stop on the United Kingdom Embassy Farm Tour at Whitestone Farm in Loudoun County, Virginia. It was an opportunity not only to welcome our international guests but also to demonstrate what sets U.S. cattle producers apart: our commitment to quality and stewardship.

The tour brought together an impressive group of leaders and stakeholders from both sides of the Atlantic. We were joined by the U.K.'s Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Right Honorable Emma Reynolds MP; Virginia Agriculture Secretary Katie Frazier; Deputy Secretary Ben Rowe; leadership from the U.K.'s National Farmers Union; and our partners at the

Virginia Farm Bureau. These conversations reaffirmed, loud and clear, that British and American producers share many of the same values and priorities. That alignment matters, because common values build the foundation for strong, lasting trade relationships.

As I shared with our guests, U.S. beef continues to resonate with British consumers, who increasingly seek the top quality product our producers work hard to deliver every day. Demand for American beef is growing in the U.K., and last month marked a major milestone: the first shipments of U.S. beef officially reached U.K. ports. That is an achievement worth celebrating — for our members, our trade partners, and the broader beef community.

This moment didn't happen overnight. Last May, the U.S. finalized a trade deal with the United Kingdom that significantly increases market access for U.S. beef. That agreement was the product of years of work, including persistent engagement by NCBA with British industry, Members of Parliament, the British Embassy, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and countless other officials and stakeholders. We laid the groundwork one meeting at a time, strengthening relationships and building trust in the high standards of American cattle and beef production.

Trade agreements like this one are essential to fulfilling one of my key priorities as your NCBA president — sustaining the strong momentum we've built around beef demand — both at home and abroad. Growing global demand doesn't happen on its own. It requires intentional outreach, robust relationships, and continued advocacy to ensure our product has access to new and expanding markets. That's why NCBA's work on international trade is so important and why we will keep engaging with British consumers and decision makers to further build confidence in U.S. beef.

The event at Whitestone Farm showcased exactly what makes our industry successful. We are transparent. We are forward thinking. And we are united with producers around the world who share our mission to feed a growing population responsibly. The U.S.-U.K. trade agreement opens new doors for our product, and with the first shipments already delivered, we are just getting started.

Thank you for everything you do as NCBA members, leaders, and advocates for U.S. beef. Together, we will continue driving demand, expanding opportunities, and strengthening the future of our industry.

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NCBA Joins White House to Celebrate Working Farm and Ranch Families.

Leaders and members of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) recently joined a White House event celebrating the Working Families Tax Cuts included in the One Big Beautiful Bill. NCBA played a key role in advancing this legislation, advocating for its passage and building on years of effort to expand the estate tax exemption, also known as the Death Tax, to help preserve family owned cattle operations.

"One of NCBA's longest standing priorities was expanding the Death Tax exemption and delivering much needed tax relief to rural America. Thanks to the Working Families Tax Cuts, American cattle producers are in much better shape this tax season than last year," said NCBA President and Virginia cattle producer Gene Copenhaver. "This tax relief protects countless family farms and ranches from being sold off to pay tax debts, and the money that producers are now saving can be reinvested in these cattle operations for future generations. NCBA thanks President Trump for supporting America's farming and ranching families."

The White House event also highlighted the real world impact of the Working Families Tax Cuts on cattle producers across the country. Several NCBA members in attendance shared how the provisions have strengthened their operations, including a first generation ranching family from South Dakota who have benefited from small business and Section 179 deductions that make critical ranching investments, such as equipment and fencing, tax deductible. Those savings helped them expand their cow herd and launch a direct-to-consumer retail beef business. A ranching family from Pennsylvania also underscored the long term benefits of the legislation, noting they are opening a Trump Account for their newborn child, an investment they say could kick-start opportunity for the next generation.

Earlier in the day, NCBA participated in a tax roundtable with the Treasurer of the United States, Brandon Beach, discussing the opportunities created by the Working Families Tax Cuts.

NCBA and ICA Engage in Tax Day Congressional Press Conference.

Members of both NCBA and Iowa Cattlemen's Association (ICA) recently participated in a Tax Day press conference hosted by Speaker of the House Mike Johnson. This event focused on the Working Families Tax Cuts included in the One Big Beautiful Bill. The legislation expanded the estate tax exemption, commonly referred to as the Death Tax, and also enacted permanent increases to the Section 199A Small Business Deduction and Section 179 Deduction and restored 100 percent bonus depreciation.

"The expanded estate tax relief and permanent small business provisions included in the Working Families Tax Cuts provide greater certainty and help ensure that family owned cattle operations can be passed on to the next generation. These provisions also give producers more flexibility to reinvest in their businesses



and plan for the future," said Gene Copenhaver.

NCBA, with support from its nationwide network of state affiliates, including ICA, has advocated for Death Tax relief and long term tax code stability for years. ICA President Craig Moss and Iowa cattle producer Justin Robbins participated in the event and detailed how the

tax provisions in the OBBB will support their operations.

"The Iowa Cattlemen's Association is appreciative of the tax relief delivered for Iowa's cattle producers through the Working Families Tax Cuts. This progress reflects the strong advocacy of the NCBA working alongside Congress to deliver real results for producers," said Craig Moss.

NCBA and OCA Express Disappointment in Federal Court Ruling on Poultry Case.

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association (OCA) President Ford Drummond and NCBA President Gene Copenhaver released the following statement after the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma's rejection of the state of Oklahoma's negotiated settlement with four poultry companies in the decades old State of Oklahoma v. Tyson Foods, Inc., et al., lawsuit regarding the application of chicken litter in the Illinois River Watershed.

"Cattle producers across Oklahoma and the Illinois River Watershed are greatly disappointed by the U.S. District Court's rejection of a settlement between Oklahoma poultry producers and the state of Oklahoma. The decades old lawsuit relies on outdated information and fails to consider the adoption of nutrient management plans, increased efficiencies, and the adoption of voluntary conservation practices," Drummond said.

While OCA and NCBA do not directly represent parties to the litigation, the ripple effect of this decision will reach far beyond the gates of Oklahoma broiler operations. Not only does this decision deal a death blow to poultry farmers across the state, but it will severely impact all of Oklahoma agriculture and any livestock operation that manages manure.

"The District Court's holding creates significant economic risk for farmers and ranchers throughout the Illinois River Watershed, while also diminishing faith in the nutrient management plan as a reliable tool for environmental compliance and regulatory protection," Copenhaver said.

NCBA and OCA will continue to work hard on behalf of all cattle producers who find themselves impacted by this decision and are prepared to support the appeal of the U.S. District Court's decision to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.

About the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. NCBA has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 866-BEEF-USA or membership@beef.org.



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AgFest Draws Thousands to UMO for 11th Annual Celebration of Agriculture.

Buses lined the University of Mount Olive campus as students stepped into a scene where country music carried across the grounds, conversations filled the air, and the aromas of food vendors mingled with the energy of a day built around agriculture, education, and opportunity.

More than 2,000 high school students, along with educators, alumni, and industry partners, gathered for the University of Mount Olive's 11th Annual AgFest, a signature event designed to connect students with opportunities in agriculture and beyond.

Hosted by the House of Raeford Farms School of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, the daylong event combined hands-on learning, career exploration, and community engagement. Students representing more than 80 high schools across North Carolina arrived throughout the morning, eager to explore opportunities in agriculture and related fields.

"This event gets bigger and better every year," said Edward Olive, director of the Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center. "It is all about creating meaningful connections between students and the agricultural industry. It gives them a chance to see what is possible beyond the classroom."

AgFest featured a large vendor fair with more than 70 exhibitors representing agricultural businesses, organizations, and university programs. Students moved from booth to booth, engaging with professionals, collecting information, and learning about career pathways ranging from animal science and horticulture to agribusiness and technology. In addition to industry exhibitors, multiple disciplines from across campus were represented, giving students a broader look at academic programs and a glimpse into college life at the University of Mount Olive.

To encourage participation, students completed a "bingo card" by visiting exhibitors, with completed cards entered into a drawing for scholarships to the University of Mount Olive.

UMO Highlights

The success of AgFest is made possible through strong partnerships with corporate and community sponsors. Presenting sponsors, Got to Be NC and Piggly Wiggly, provided foundational support for the event. Additional major sponsors included the N.C. Electric Membership Corporation, Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation, Four County Electric Membership Corporation, Smithfield Foods, and House of Raeford Farms. "Their support helps cover event costs and ensures students can participate in a full day of programming that includes meals, entertainment, and hands-on experiences," said Olive.

In addition to the vendor fair, the event included food trucks, sponsored meals, giveaways, and live entertainment throughout the day. Two concerts featuring North Carolina country artists Kaylin Roberson and Christina Eagle, a recent contestant on The Voice, provided a festive backdrop, while an alumni reception brought together former UMO students who now serve as educators and industry leaders. "It is special to see our alumni return, many of them now bringing their own students," Olive said. "They were once here as participants, and now they are helping guide the next generation."

University of Mount Olive President Dr. H. Edward Croom



emphasized the significance of AgFest within the broader mission of the institution. “We are proud of the growth of our agriculture programs and the interest we are seeing from across the state,” Croom said. “Events like AgFest highlight the strength of our partnerships with industry and our commitment to preparing students for meaningful careers.”



S.C. CHAROLAIS NEWS

By **GEORGEANNE WEBB**, S.C. Charolais Association

The first thing I would like to notify you of is to keep Greg Clifton in your prayers. He had open heart surgery on the first of April. He is doing fine but has been in a lot of pain. I don't know if we will see him auctioneering much at sales for a good while, but hopefully we will see him again in the future.

I hope everyone in South Carolina has been keeping up with the elections coming up in June, especially for S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture. I have personally spoken with Danny Lee Ford II and Cody Simpson. They are both fine men, and I would never take it upon myself to tell you who to vote for. Call them and go to some meeting close to you where they are speaking and decide for yourself. The only thing I will harp on is most of us want no one associated with the current Commissioner of Agriculture of South Carolina. My thoughts are that we are in need of a change. I feel like dealing with the current administration has been like an ingrown hair. It has festered for years, and being able to pull it out would give so much relief. The rest of the politics are a blur. I only focus on agriculture and protecting farmers and cattlemen.

I have some great news concerning finding a veterinarian. My great friend Dr. Emily Waggoner is going back out there on her own. I am celebrating because she will be available through the week for cattle, and she is the best.

Hopefully this weather will start behaving because right now we have spring one day, summer the next day, and winter the next with little or no rain. Ideal pneumonia weather for people and calves, so keep your Draxxin handy for the calves and the Urgent Care phone number handy for you.



Croom also noted recent investments in the university's agricultural programs, including the development of a new educational livestock facility and continued expansion within the newly named House of Raeford Farms School of Agriculture and Biological Sciences.

Throughout the day, UMO students played an essential role in organizing and operating the event, assisting vendors, guiding visitors, and ensuring a welcoming experience for guests. Their involvement reflected the hands-on, student centered approach that defines the university's agricultural programs.

For many students visiting, AgFest offered a first look at college life and the opportunities available within the agricultural field. For others, it served as a return visit to a campus already familiar through previous participation. “This is more than just an event,” said Dr. Steve Matthis, Dean for the House of Raeford Farms School of Agriculture and Biological Sciences. “It is an experience that helps students see themselves in these careers and envision their future.”

With strong attendance, expanded programming, and continued support from sponsors and industry partners, the 11th Annual AgFest reinforced its role as a cornerstone event for agricultural education in North Carolina.

About the University of Mount Olive. UMO is a private institution rooted in the liberal arts tradition with defining Christian values. It was founded by the Convention of Original Free Will Baptists. For more information, visit www.umo.edu.



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Preserving North Carolina's Farmland

By **SIMON GONZALEZ**, *N.C. State University*

Once Raleigh is in the rearview mirror, the stretch of Highway 1 between North Carolina's capital city and Sanford becomes almost bucolic. Glimpses of lush, green pastureland and verdant forests appear through the trees that line the highway.

It seems to be the very definition of rural.

But appearances can be deceiving. The eastern edge of Chatham County and the northern parts of Lee County are rapidly transforming from rural to suburban. Land that has been farmed for generations is becoming housing developments as the metro area spills over from Wake County into its neighbors to the south.

"This county is being overtaken," said Paul Howard, who owns a 200 acre pine farm in Lee County. "It is going to be a suburb of Raleigh before long."

It's a story that's repeated again and again across the state. In county after county, especially the ones that adjoin North Carolina's booming metro areas, farms are being replaced by subdivisions.

North Carolina is experiencing the second highest farmland loss after only Texas. According to the American Farmland Trust, North Carolina could lose 1.2 million acres of farmland by 2040, with the state already losing an estimated 55 acres every day.

"If we don't do something now, we risk losing our agricultural diversity and farming heritage," Noah Ranells said. "When farmland is fragmented, it doesn't come back together."

Offering Solutions – Ranells is the Eastern director for NC FarmLink, an N.C. State Extension program working to solve the issue of diminishing farmland. He and Western director Stephen Bishop offer no-cost succession consultations to help farmers and landowners understand options to preserve their acreage, including estate planning, farm transfers, and tools such as agricultural conservation easements.

NC FarmLink also connects new and beginning farmers with available land through mentorship, leasing, employment, and partnership opportunities.

"NC FarmLink works with farmers and landowners on farm transition issues," Bishop said. "And whether we like it or not, North Carolina is a transitioning state. We're growing incredibly fast. There's a large amount of people moving to North Carolina, and that's putting a lot of pressure on farmland prices. We connect folks to different resources and tools and other agencies that are also leaning into this issue."

NC FarmLink is at the forefront of N.C. State Extension's efforts to preserve farm, forest, and pastureland in the state. The multi-pronged strategy includes workshops and seminars that provide vital information to families who want to keep their land in production.

One such workshop took place in Lee County, which could potentially lose 30–40 percent of its current cropland and farmland in the next 15 years.

"We're seeing a lot of development pressure, particularly in the northern part of Lee County," said Bill Stone, director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension center in the county. "Folks reach out to us on a consistent basis about what options they may have when a developer comes to them and makes them an offer."

Experts from N.C. State Extension and key partners addressed estate planning and long term conservation for landowners considering the future of their farms. Topics included present use value and property tax implications, farm succession and estate planning, land leasing, and voluntary agricultural districts and conservation easements.

Imparting Knowledge – Farmers know about growing seasons. They are well versed in crop yields. With the help of N.C. State Extension experts, they know about the latest research into drought and disease resistant plants and how to adapt new technologies.

They know about livestock, breeding and calving seasons, feed nutrition, and biosecurity.

But knowing how to get the most from your farmland and knowing how to protect it for the next generation are vastly different. Farmland preservation can be a complex process filled with legal, financial, and family considerations.

"Farm transition issues can be very complex and confusing," Bishop said. "It really takes a team of folks to help farmers with them."

The team at the workshop in Lee County included N.C. State Extension experts like Stone, Ranells, and Andrew Branan, a lawyer who specializes in agriculture and resource economics with a focus on farm and land succession.

The workshop also featured a plethora of partners, including the Triangle Land Conservancy, Chatham County Soil and Water Conservation District, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Land Loss Prevention Project, the N.C. Forest Service, and the Lee County tax office.

"There are a lot of organizations that are leaning into this, which is awesome," Bishop said. "We really try to make the workshop as interactive and hands-on as possible, so it is not an information overload. We want folks to feel empowered to start planning."

Seeking Answers – Gary Thomas has been farming in Lee County for 51 years, just like his father and grandfather before him. The 70-year-old row crop farmer operates a diversified operation that includes tobacco, wheat, corn, soybeans, oats, and sweet potatoes. He grows produce in 19 greenhouses and has six layer houses producing up to 60,000 eggs daily.

Thomas despairs when he sees what is happening in the county.

"The land is all going to houses, and there ain't going to be nowhere to farm," he says. "I don't know what y'all are going to eat in a few more years. I can survive. I can catch a fish, kill a deer or hog. But there's a lot that can't do that."

Thomas's strong preference is to keep his land in production.

“I’m the third generation,” he said. “My daughter would be the fourth, and then her kids would be the fifth. That’s already happening. I have one grandchild that’s 19 that’s come into the farm.”

That desire is shared by his daughter, Mandy Johnson.

“I want to keep farming as long as possible,” she said. “We’d like to keep what he’s got now so we have something for my kids and my brother’s kids to continue on.”

Through the workshop hosted by Lee County Cooperative Extension, Thomas learned more about estate planning, the rights of heirs, and issues such as the tax implications of bequeathing 800 acres at a time when land assessments are skyrocketing because of increasing prices brought on by development.

“You never know with the size of the farm we got,” he said. “I just lost my mother on August 16 and my stepdad on December 16. I’m the executor of that estate, and I know what they’re going through. So we need to look at some options of transferring the land over.”

Paul Howard, owner of the pine farm, also feels a strong attachment to his land and wants to protect it from development.

“It’s a legacy from my father,” he said. “He was a physician here in town, but his real love was being in the woods. He started this property with 80 acres, and then my sister, my wife, and I started investing with him, and we ended up getting 200 acres.”

Howard, 68, began farming full time during the pandemic, continuing his father’s work of planting and maintaining longleaf pine stands while harvesting mature loblollies. The land includes two ponds that support diverse wildlife, including beavers, otters, geese, herons, and other bird species.

“It’s really important for us to try to preserve the natural land that we’ve been given,” he said. “Hopefully we can turn it back to where it was 200 years ago before we wipe out all the longleaf.”

With guidance from extension and its partners, Howard and his family are pursuing a conservation easement, a preservation option that allows landowners to receive payment for development values while maintaining agricultural use in perpetuity with any change in land ownership.

Easements are funded by grants from state and local governments — including the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation trust fund — and organizations such as the Triangle Land Conservancy, a land trust non-profit operating in Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Orange, and Wake counties.

“An easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the landowner and a land trust that restricts certain uses of the property to protect the agricultural values or conservation values,” said Melissa Clunan, land protection manager with TLC. “They retain full ownership. They can still farm, they can sell the land, or they can leave it to their kids. There are just restrictions in place to essentially prevent the property from being developed.”

Howard considers it the perfect arrangement for his situation.

“We just want to protect our farm for the generations to come in this community,” he said.

Preserving a Way of Life – Bill Stone often hears tales from people like Thomas and Howard in his role as director of N.C. Extension’s Lee County center.

“Typically it is somebody who is truly committed to holding onto their land,” Stone said. “It has not only production value but also significant sentimental value to them. We hear a lot of stories about their grandfather or their great-grandfather or grandmother, their memories of that land. We can’t always put a price tag on why things are important to us.”

Stone and other directors of extension centers in exurban counties take pride in their state. They understand why people want to move here. They are not anti-growth.

“We understand that development is going to happen, that communities and counties will change,” Stone said. “We want to encourage smart growth where it makes sense, and we want to make sure that we maintain what makes this community special.”

One thing that makes a community special is access to local food, whether at a grocery store, farmers market, roadside fruit and vegetable stand, or through community supported agriculture.

Not everyone sees disappearing farmland as an existential crisis. Food, they say, will always be available. It might come from large farms, whether in North Carolina or another state. It might be imported. But it will be there.

NC FarmLink’s Ranells — himself a farmer in Orange County — has heard those arguments. Even if true, he says they don’t negate the need for local food systems.

“We will never be able to future-proof agriculture to a degree where we’re not going to need land to produce food,” he said. “We will never be able to anticipate — whether it’s health or some other issue — where food won’t need to be available at a local level.”

Ranells points to the pandemic as a time when robust local food systems were vital.

“As we saw with COVID-19, the industrial food system didn’t always hold up under the strain,” he said. “The state is almost obligated to ensure some level of resilience at the county level so when unexpected things happen, counties can survive and buffer that effect.”

Extension’s efforts to preserve farm, forest, and pastureland also help to preserve an important way of life.

“Lee County did a land use plan in 2018, talking to citizens about what they valued, about why they felt Lee County was such a unique and great place,” Stone said. “Three out of the four areas they emphasized related to open space, to the balance of urban and rural, to that small town community feel, lack of traffic, and lack of hustle and bustle. We know that’s what people want, and we need to try to stay ahead of it the best we can, to be proactive so we don’t look back in 20 years and say, ‘I wish we would’ve done this. I wish we would’ve done more.’ I think we’re at that inflection point now where we have really gotten to push and promote these programs.”

Extension’s farm succession efforts exist to help preserve a robust food system in North Carolina. They exist to preserve a way of life. They exist for farmers like Thomas, who place a value on their land far above what they could make from selling to a developer.

“I love the land and seeing things grow,” Thomas said. “It’s in my blood. You get calls all the time from people wanting to buy land. You’ve got to love it and know how to do without money. If you ain’t got that, you don’t care about the land.”

Strategic Culling of the Cow Herd in Drought Situations

By MATT POORE & BECKY SPEARMAN, N.C. State University

Deciding which cows to cull can be a difficult and emotional decision, but it must be done as a normal part of a good beef cattle management system. Beef cow profits are tied directly to the number and pounds of calves sold. Culling management is very important in ensuring that each cow on your farm has a high chance of producing a good calf with a high market value. The goal of a beef operation is for each cow to have a high quality calf every year. Cows not meeting that goal are not making you money but rather are costing you money to feed and manage.

As total input costs increase, beef producers must make good decisions on culling to improve their efficiency. During times of drought and high feed costs, culling becomes an even higher priority because it can help you target your resources to higher value animals and prevent you from wasting resources on feeding unproductive animals.

To have a good culling program, it is important to have records on your cattle. Some common information would be cow identification number, cow age, calving dates, calf information including weaning weights, and other observations you make about a cow, i.e., “wild in the working chute” or “mean when you approach her calf.” Your records can be as simple as a written record on a cow note card created for that purpose, a simple computer spreadsheet, or a more advanced computer record system.

However you keep track of your records, you will want to keep the information from year to year organized to help you prioritize which animals to cull. More advanced computer record keeping programs are available for maintaining cow herd records and are highly recommended. Consult with your Cooperative Extension Livestock Agent for help in developing or improving your cow identification and record keeping program. Having your cow records on your smartphone is a game changer!

One very important thing to consider is how many cows you want to maintain on your farm. Determining the ideal number of brood cows for your farm, or the correct stocking rate, will help you decide how many cows you need to cull each year to maintain that ideal number. One thing to keep in mind here is that stocking rate should actually be thought of in lbs rather than cows, because as cows increase in size, the same piece of ground can support fewer cows.

During times of drought, you may need to cull down to fewer than that average ideal.

An optimally stocked farm should be grazing for about 240–300 days with about 60–120 days of winter hay feeding. If you are consistently feeding hay longer than that, you are probably considerably overstocked. Decreasing stocking rate or improving your grazing management can turn a 120 day hay feeding season into a 60 day hay feeding season, which will improve your farm efficiency.

The first step in the strategic culling process is working the cows and assigning them to a culling priority group so that culling can be an organized process. When working cattle, make sure you

look closely at the cow’s eyes, feet, teeth, and udder and record any defects you find. Haltering the cow or using a hook doctor will help you inspect her teeth with a low risk of injury to you. If you have never mouthed your cows, it is a key management tool every cow/calf producer should be skilled at.

If you are unfamiliar with aging cattle by their teeth, look at one of the many guides there are on the web. Keeping up with these kinds of details on your animals will prove beneficial even in times when there is no drought stress on your system.

A culling priority grouping system of 1 to 4 is suggested.

1. Cows that you are not going to sell no matter what. These are likely young, productive cows that have good feet, legs, udders, and disposition. Bred replacement heifers would usually be in this group. Over half your herd may be in this category.

2. Cows with a score of 2 have some minor defect, such as increasing in age, minor tooth problems, minor foot or udder problems, or somewhat ill disposition. These high cows have potentially high value because there is demand for middle age bred cows.

3. Cows with a score of 3 have more significant defects like advancing age, worn or broken teeth, lameness, or bad disposition. Some of these cows are bred and sound, and their calf will be valuable at weaning, so they may be more valuable marketed as bred cows on a case by case basis.

4. Cows with a score of 4 would be culled immediately and would normally be culled in any year. This group would include all open cows and any cows with major defects.

Following are criteria that should be considered as you make a culling priority list:

1. Pregnancy status – Pregnancy check all cows. The three main ways to pregnancy check are rectal palpation, ultrasound, or blood tests. Cows that will not raise calves are not going to make you money and should be on the top of the cull list. This would include any replacement heifers that are not pregnant but that have been



exposed to a bull and had the opportunity to breed. These animals would be in group 4 and should be culled immediately.

2. Major defects – Major defects would include very bad temperament, chronic lameness, eye problems — early signs of cancer eye — or severe udder problems. These cows should also be in group 4 and should be culled as soon as possible.

3. Age – Inspect the teeth of cows so that you know the number of effective years each cow has left. Cows with broken or badly worn teeth should be high on the culling list with a score of 4. If their teeth are somewhat worn, indicating they are getting old, but they have a few years left in the herd, they should get a score of 3. Cows with early signs of tooth wear — middle age cows — should receive a score of 2.

4. Feet and legs – To be productive, the cow must be able to walk. Foot structure is currently a problem in most cattle because of selection for many production traits without much concern about feet. Look at the angle of the foot and the claw structure. Is the foot angle overly steep so that the cow's heel nearly hits the ground when she walks, or is the angle too shallow so that she is walking on her tippy toes? Are the claws normal shaped, or are they curved or uneven? Is the set of the claws wide, or do they point forward normally? Are there any corns or other obvious defects? How well does the cow walk? A cow with some minor foot issues goes in group 2, with structural problems going in group 3. Cows with severe structural problems or chronic lameness should go in group 4.

5. Poor production – Consider culling cows that produce calves with very low weaning weights. These cows may calve every year, but their calves are small enough that they are probably not making you much money. Cows with extremely light weaning weights should be in group 3. Cows with less than average weaning weights (but not extremely low) should be in group 2.

6. Late calving cows – For farms with a defined calving season, consider selling any cows that will calve late or out of your calving season. These cows have a higher likelihood of coming up open, or producing a lightweight calf. These cows might end up with a high priority for culling due to low weaning weight, but even if they do produce a pretty good calf, they still should be considered for culling when you are culling deep. Pregnant cows in this category would be marketed differently than open, defective, or old cows. These cows may be out of line with your calving season, but they might work for someone else. They would typically be in group 2 or 3, depending on quality.

7. Poor doers – These are the cows that are always thin no matter what you do. They might get a high culling priority due to weaning a poor calf, or they might be old cows with short teeth. Even if they don't end up with a high culling priority due to one of the criteria discussed above, they should be considered for culling during a drought year because there is a higher chance that they might not breed back or that they might have underlying health issues that would come out during times of stress. These cows would be in group 2 or 3.

8. Extremes – A deep culling due to drought might be a good time to consider selling any cows that are extremes in terms of frame size or muscling in your herd. These may be very small or very large cows that produce calves that are not uniform with the rest of your calf crop — or perhaps dairy cross or off color cows. Anything you can do to increase the uniformity of your herd will help you with future

marketing plans. These cows would generally be in group 2 or 3.

Once a preliminary score has been put on the cow at chuteside, spend additional time studying records to determine a final culling group for each cow. During drought situations, producers must make difficult decisions about culling and will usually cull some cows that they would normally keep. Making an informed decision will make you feel better about having to sell those cows when you need to.

Depending on the severity of the drought and your feed situation, you can use your culling priority list to sell cows in an orderly fashion. Having a score on paper will help make the culling decision without the emotional constraints that can happen at chute side or at the door to the livestock trailer.

Sell the number 4 cows as soon as possible after weaning calves. Consider early weaning calves and then culling the cows earlier than typical. If the drought is severe or feed is very short, sell the number 3s. If the drought continues and feed is expensive, sell your number 2s. The cows in group 2 may be marketed most effectively through private treaty or a special bred cow sale.

Instead of being depressed about selling off productive cows to deal with a drought, you should think of a deep culling as an opportunity to improve your herd, and you can generate funds to help you feed the core of your genetic resource. Culling early will relieve the demands on the pasture, improving conditions for all the other cattle that remain. With high cattle prices, selling early will really help the farm to feed the remaining cows. When you cull in response to drought, regardless of how you decide to market the cows, make sure you do it before they lose body condition and a lot of their potential value.

Nearly every producer will do some extra culling as part of their drought management plan. As you make these difficult culling decisions, it is important that you get the best price for your cows. Carrying your cows to the sale barn without talking to a marketing specialist is probably not the best approach, especially for young and middle aged cows that are bred or that have a calf at side.

Culling strategies based on sound facts and decision making will benefit your farm in the long run. Gathering information on the cows and then deciding which to sell and which to keep is a key tool in drought management. Keeping young and productive cows and selling old or defective cows will allow you to grow back into a greatly improved herd once the drought is over.



N.C. State Extension Helps Protect Farmers From Data Rustlers

By SIMON GONZALEZ, N.C. State University

“Cybersecurity outreach efforts are increasing as digital bandits target agriculture.”

Anyone who has watched John Wayne movies or read the likes of Zane Grey or Louis L’Amour knows that stealing a rancher’s cows was one of the most heinous crimes in the Old West — a hanging offense, to be sure.

Cattle rustling is rare these days. Now, farmers have to guard against a completely different threat. Instead of desperados with horses and lassos, it’s anonymous bandits sitting behind computer monitors and keyboards. It’s the Wild West meeting science fiction — except that it’s all too real.

“When you’d watch these movies about the Wild West, you’d see people rustling cattle,” said Kenny Sherin, the community and economic development program manager for N.C. State Extension. “You had to be local to be involved in stealing cattle. But when you introduce digital technology to a farm, the opportunity expands globally. That cattle rustler turns into a data rustler.”

Cooperative Extension has a long history of helping rural communities adapt to change, supporting them through major shifts including electrification and the adoption of farm machinery.

Today, the shift is digital. Extension programs run from helping implement the latest advances in artificial intelligence on farms to basic digital literacy programs — email, web navigation, applying for jobs and benefits online — in areas that previously lacked access to broadband.

More opportunities to use modern technology also mean more opportunities for bad actors in the digital space. Consequently, extension programs increasingly include an emphasis on cybersecurity to help people operate a modern farm and live safely online.

“Anytime you put a connected device on your farm, it’s a window,” Sherin said. “There are so many rural places in North Carolina that just haven’t had access to connectivity, so people may not be aware of the dangers that come with being connected. We are building awareness of how your devices are protected and who can get access. Extension is working to relate cybersecurity to farms and farmers, to see where there are vulnerabilities in the food supply chain and in agriculture.”

Farmers face the same threats as anyone who is online — identity theft, phishing, ransomware, and malware. Large companies typically mandate annual employee training that offers best practices to mitigate risks. Extension’s efforts include providing similar training for producers who might have only recently gained access to broadband.

“You don’t have to be a coder or a cybersecurity expert,” Sherin

said. “Guarding against attacks includes simple things that you could and should do every day — changing default passwords, using multifactor authentication on all your accounts, being able to identify phishing practices and not taking the bait, and updating software across all systems. These are known as the Core 4.”

N.C. Cattle Receipts, Trends, and Prices for the Month of MARCH 2026			
Cattle Receipts: 18,931 • Previous Month: 10,935			
Feeder supply - 20% steers • 43% heifers • 37% bulls			
SLAUGHTER CLASSES			
	Avg. Wt.	Price	
Cows - % Lean			
Breaker	1,527	\$155.80	
Boner	1,289	\$164.53	
Lean	1,048	\$142.45	
Bulls - Yield Grade 1-2	1,588	\$190.22	
FEEDER CLASSES			
FEEDER STEERS (Medium and Large 1-2)			
Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	423	485.25	\$2,052.61
450-500	474	465.22	\$2,205.14
500-550	528	443.25	\$2,340.36
550-600	569	421.31	\$2,397.25
600-650	623	392.27	\$2,443.84
650-700	669	379.05	\$2,535.84
FEEDER BULLS (Medium and Large 1-2)			
Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	423	469.34	\$1,985.31
450-500	470	446.88	\$2,100.34
500-550	522	410.57	\$2,143.18
550-600	571	391.87	\$2,237.58
600-650	622	369.20	\$2,296.42
650-700	668	346.06	\$2,311.68
FEEDER HEIFERS (Medium and Large 1-2)			
Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	423	446.28	\$1,887.76
450-500	471	422.64	\$1,990.63
500-550	522	387.20	\$2,021.18
550-600	570	364.92	\$2,080.04
600-650	620	346.48	\$2,148.18
650-700	671	330.46	\$2,217.39
Source: N.C. Department of Agriculture - USDA Market News Service			
Raleigh, N.C. - 919-707-3156			

As farms become more automated and adopt digital agricultural technology, including artificial intelligence, they are increasingly exposed to both opportunistic and targeted attacks from data bandits ranging from nation-states to environmental hacktivists. Potential consequences include equipment lockouts, disrupted operations, and even large scale livestock die offs.

“A recent example is a nation-state actor targeting grain storage monitoring systems seeking to rot the strategic wheat reserves of another nation,” Sherin said. “There was a recorded case of a dairy’s automated milking machine being hacked and taken over. There was a case where an irrigation system was hacked. As more and more people adopt these technologies, it’s going to be more prevalent that these things are going to happen.”

It doesn’t take a vivid imagination to envision a worst case scenario.

“Think about a group targeting poultry operations in North Carolina,” Sherin said. “The controls that regulate the airflow and the watering system in barns are automated now. It wouldn’t take long to do some major damage. I think there will be more and more cases where farms are intentionally targeted. It’s not rampant. It’s not out of control now, but it’s something we have to take into consideration with the adoption of technology. We have to stay ahead of the threat.”

With 101 centers across North Carolina, Extension is perfectly positioned to address the threat.

“Organizations that have IT support make sure their employees are trained,” Sherin said. “But who’s that going to be for farms? Extension could be the ideal place. We need to make sure that farmers aren’t the weakest link in the chain when it comes to cybersecurity.”

Sherin is working with Amir Lawrence, a cybersecurity analyst with N.C. State’s William and Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, to develop farm focused materials. The CyberPest Management resources could be incorporated into required pesticide credit training sessions.

“We’re working on creating materials that ag extension agents can use to help build awareness for cybersecurity on farms,” Sherin said. “Farmers have to renew their pesticide education credits to keep them up to date. Offering training at the beginning of those sessions will start creating that awareness that’s needed.”

Education efforts also include raising awareness about potential threats to the agriculture community. In February, Sherin, Laura Rodgers, and Ahmad Patooghy spoke at the North Carolina Cybersecurity Symposium in Raleigh.

Rodgers is director of cybersecurity practice at N.C. State’s Secure Computing Institute, and Patooghy is interim director of the Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity Research, Education, and Outreach at N.C. A&T State University. Their session, titled Moving Cybersecurity from the Nerds to the Herds, emphasized agriculture’s importance to the nation.

“The federal government has designated 16 areas of our economy as critical infrastructure, including water and medical. Agriculture and food is on that list,” Sherin said. “We wanted to create an interest in moving knowledge from IT people and cybersecurity

people to farmers and how to give them clear and relevant guidance.”

Sherin, Rodgers, and Patooghy are collaborating under an initiative they call the Ag Defenders Coalition.

“We’re bringing industry people and ag business folks together,” Sherin said.

Sherin is also building partnerships with federal government initiatives and national nonprofits focused on cybersecurity efforts in the agriculture sector, including the FBI’s InfraGard, Food and Ag-ISAC, and Bio-ISAC.

“Laura and I did a presentation to an InfraGard group that meets in the Triangle,” Sherin said. “They were very interested in making sure they appeared at spaces where farmers gather to start generating that awareness campaign also. We’re bringing InfraGard in, we’re bringing ag businesses and cybersecurity consultants in, we’re bringing Extension in, and creating this program and awareness to benefit producers.”

The InfraGard organization plans to attend Extension’s Blackland Farm Managers Tour on August 5 to help build awareness of cybersecurity risks with producers.

“The concept of cybersecurity is gaining momentum,” Sherin said. “I’m proud to say Extension was a little bit in front of that, and now it’s getting more attention.”

TRI-STATE AG EXPO

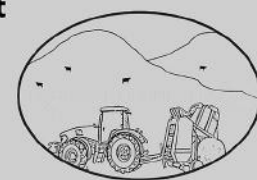
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IGS UPDATE

IGS Updates Docility Evaluation. As part of an ongoing series of updates to the genetic evaluation, updates to the docility evaluation were implemented into production beginning the week of April 13.

Why does docility matter? Cattle operations are often a family business involving multiple generations, from children being raised to take over the ranch to aging grandparents passing down their ranching wisdom. For that reason, safety and reducing handler risk are of the utmost importance. No one wants to be run up the side of a fence while

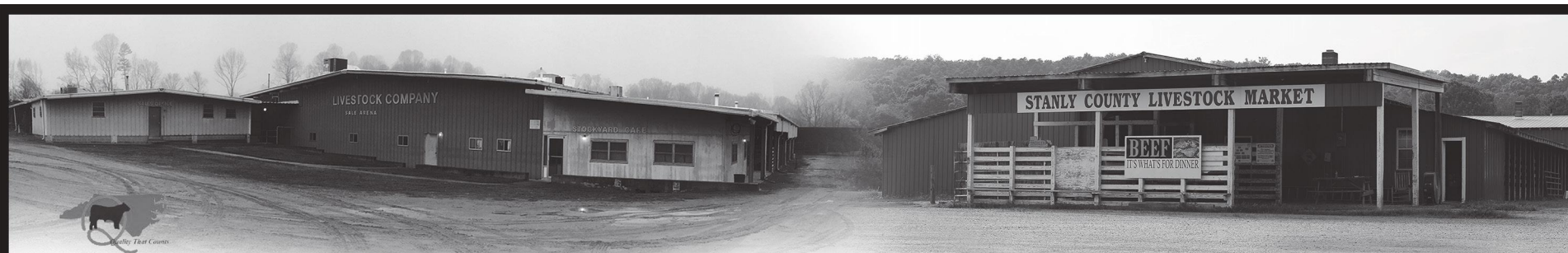
handling their cattle. Docile cattle often lead to more efficient handling by reducing stress and working through facilities with fewer issues.

Docility isn't just a learned behavior or temperament. Docility is a measurable trait and is heritable ($h^2 = 0.23$), which means it can be improved through genetic selection.

What changed in the docility genetic evaluation? The IGS genetic evaluation has been undergoing a series of updates over the past couple of years. The updates are being implemented for each group of traits one at a time. These updates have allowed the IGS genetic evaluation to run efficiently and maintain a weekly return of EPD. These updates can be thought of as the routine maintenance necessary to keep the genetic evaluation running most effectively, just like an oil change is necessary maintenance to keep your vehicle running.

The updates are the same as those that were applied to the previously updated evaluations, including carcass weight/ribeye area, growth (weight traits), and calving ease.

1. **Breed by decade interaction effect** – In genetic evaluations, other variables are included in the model as effects, which helps further break down the differences in phenotype (docility). Previously, breed and decade were fit as an interaction effect, meaning those variables were grouped together — e.g., Simmental x 1970. Some of those combinations of effects did not have many animals representing them, which was causing the evaluation to solve slower. They are now fit as two separate effects: one for breed and one for decade — e.g.,



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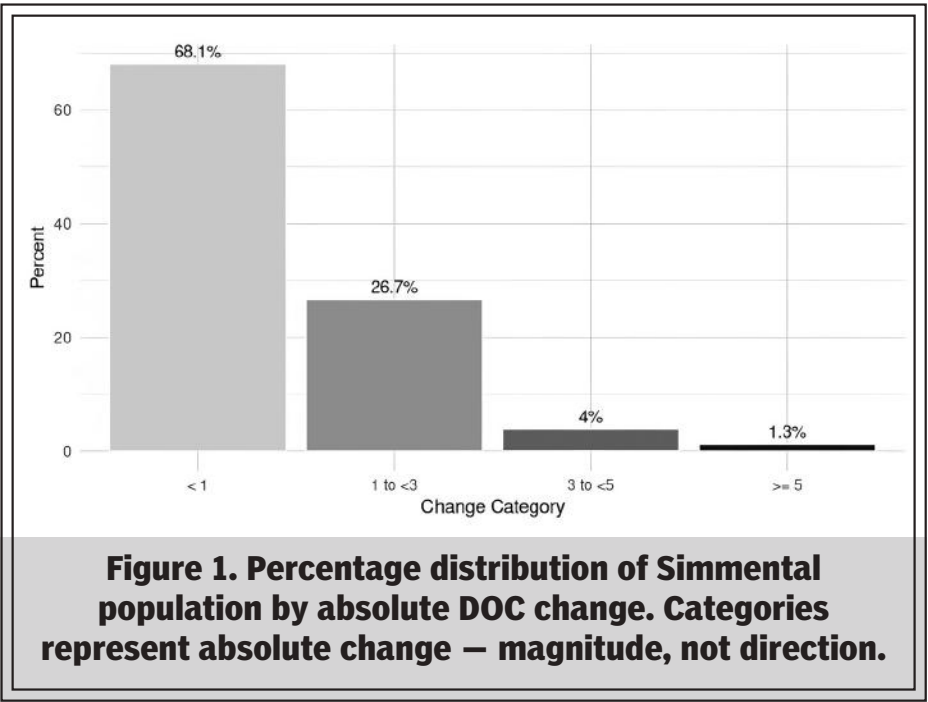
If you need help working your cattle, contact Marcus Harward at 704-322-0840 or Chuck Doolittle at 704-221-1447 for more information.

Simmental is a breed effect, and 1970 is a separate decade effect.

2. *External EPD incorporation* – External EPDs are any EPDs reported to IGS that were calculated by an entity outside of IGS. The statistical methodology for how those external EPDs get incorporated in the IGS evaluation has been updated, allowing the impact an external EPD has on an animal’s IGS EPD to be more easily assessed.

The average change across the entire Simmental database was +0.52, or an increase of about half a Docility EPD unit. As seen in Figure 1 , the majority — 68.1 percent — of animals changed by less than one Docility EPD unit in either a positive or negative direction.

In general, members should see minimal re-ranking of animals’ DOC EPD. As always, members are advised to use the most current percentile ranking tables, which are available on Herdbook.org.



Why should I report docility phenotypes? Phenotypes are the backbone of genetic evaluations. The data that members report is crucial to the ability of IGS to return reliable EPD results. Although more cattle producers have expressed interest in docility in recent years, docility still remains a relatively lowly reported trait. Recording and reporting docility phenotypes will provide you with more accurate Docility EPD for your animals.

To record a docility phenotype, assign each animal a chute score on a 1–6 scale. Docility can be assessed at weaning or yearling, but the entire age group of cattle should be scored at the same time and by the same person. Scoring consistency is key to measuring a trait like docility.

Key Takeaways – Producers are increasingly recognizing the importance of docility in managing cattle.

- Updates to the docility evaluation are necessary to keep it running as efficiently as possible.
- Members may see changes in Docility EPD, but animals will generally rank similarly to how they did prior to the update.
- Phenotypes reported by members are the foundation of IGS’s ability to provide accurate genetic selection tools.
- Members should consider collecting docility phenotypes on all calves at weaning or yearling.

Members who have questions about the updates and/or specific

animals are welcome to reach out to Dr. Elizabeth Dressler, ASA Lead Geneticist.

About International Genetic Solutions. *IGS delivers the best objectivity described, user friendly, and science based genetic predictions to enhance the profitability of beef cattle producers. Founded in 2010 from a partnership between the American Simmental Association and the American Red Angus Association, IGS has evolved into an unprecedented collaboration between leading beef breed associations and partners to advance selection tools and producer profitability. The organization is also home to the nation’s largest multi-breed beef cattle evaluation as well as the IGS Feeder Profit Calculator and other tools. For more information, visit www.internationalgeneticsolutions.com.*

DOCILITY SCORE	DESCRIPTION
1	Docile. Mild disposition. Gentle and easily handled. Undisturbed, settled, somewhat dull. Stands and moves slowly during processing. Does not pull on the headgate when in a chute. Exits the chute calmly.
2	Restless. Quieter than average, but may be stubborn during processing. May try to back out of the chute or pull back on the headgate. Some flicking of the tail. Exits chute promptly.
3	Nervous. Typical temperament. Is manageable, but nervous and impatient. A moderate amount of struggling, movement, and tail flicking. Repeated pushing and pulling on the headgate. Exits chute briskly.
4	Flighty (Wild). Jumpy and out of control; quivers and struggles violently. May bellow and froth at the mouth. Continuous tail flicking. Defecates and urinates during processing. Frantically runs the fence line and may jump when penned individually. Exhibits long flight distance and exits the chute wildly.
5	Aggressive. May be similar to score 4, but with added aggressive behavior, fearfulness, extreme agitation, and continuous movement, which may include jumping and bellowing while in a chute. Exits the chute frantically and may exhibit attack behavior when handled alone.
6	Very Aggressive. Extremely aggressive temperament. Thrashes about or attacks wildly when confined in small, tight places.



Boehringer Ingelheim

NEWS

\ When Stress Tips the Scale: A Look at Calf Immunity and BRD Prevention. *How stress, vaccination timing, and product choice influence respiratory disease prevention in young calves.* The first months of a calf's life are a critical window for respiratory disease risk. Their immune system is still developing, making them especially vulnerable during periods of stress. Whether calves move through a beef stocker system or remain on a dairy, management decisions can shape how well they respond to vaccination and how resilient they remain during disease challenges.

Building immunity is not as simple as giving a vaccine – Preventing disease is always better than waiting for calves to show signs of illness. While proper animal husbandry and care are key to supporting calf health, vaccination remains central to managing bovine respiratory disease (BRD) and preventing permanent damage. To get the most out of any vaccination program, it's important to understand how immunity develops.

"Just because we administer a vaccine doesn't mean that equals 100 percent immunity," said Matt Washburn, DVM, Boehringer Ingelheim.

Vaccination is a powerful disease prevention tool, but it does not override biology. The immune response depends on timing, energy, and availability and the overall stress load on the calf at the time of administration.

"I like to think of stress as a seesaw effect," explained Dr. Washburn. "You've got immunity on one side and layers of stress on the other. Every time we add a layer of stress, that scale is going to start to tip. Things like transport, handling, commingling, nutrition, and hydration are all going to affect how that calf responds to vaccination."

While some stressors — like weather — can't be controlled, other events, including processing, transportation, and commingling, can be planned for. When multiple stressors are stacked together, even well designed vaccination protocols can underperform if immune demand exceeds the calf's ability to respond.

"Stressors are likely to decrease the immune response to any challenge that might be going on," said Curt Vlietstra, DVM, Boehringer Ingelheim. "Dairy calves are typically more accessible than beef calves. But, just because it's convenient to vaccinate when you have your hands on a calf doesn't mean it's ideal timing for building immunity."

To build immunity against a challenge like BRD, a calf's immune system needs to have time to respond to a given vaccine. When

possible, vaccination should be scheduled far enough ahead of a stress event to allow immunity to develop.

"In an ideal world, we're administering vaccines several weeks before a stressful event," said Dr. Washburn. "From a stocker standpoint, that's not a luxury always available. But it's still important to understand that those few weeks are what's going to offer the biggest bang for your buck out of a vaccine."

While timing plays a critical role, it's only one piece of an effective prevention strategy.

Understanding the vaccine you're using is important – The foundational details for vaccination, like timing, are relevant to all calves, but building a protocol that's unique to your business and herd starts with a conversation with your veterinarian.

"It's important to ask questions like, 'What's the risk of adding another vaccine or the risk of pulling one out? Do we have gaps in protection?'" emphasized Dr. Vlietstra. "Having these important discussions with a herd veterinarian or a professional services veterinarian like Dr. Washburn and me sets up an understanding of what can realistically be expected from different vaccines in different groups of calves."

Those conversations ultimately come down to immune capacity and product choice. Every additional antigen introduced into a high risk calf increases immune system demand, which may already be managing stress, nutrition changes, and pathogen exposure.

"Each vaccine you administer places its own demand on the immune system," said Dr. Washburn. "When you're talking about high risk calves that already have a lot of stress on them, stacking a lot of vaccines on top of one another means they may not respond as well as you'd like."

Dr. Vlietstra adds that immune demand isn't just about the number of administrations.

"Sometimes, we look at one bottle and one syringe, but it's important to think about what's in that bottle," he said. "Is it a three way, a five way, a seven way? It's not just how many shots you're giving; it's what's in them."

That's where vaccine formulation becomes important. Differences in design — including the adjuvant type — affect immune stimulation, particularly in young calves that may still carry maternal antibodies.

"Historically, it was accepted as a fact that maternal antibodies would block an injectable vaccine," said Dr. Vlietstra. "Now we know that the vaccine adjuvant MetaStim works alongside the preexisting antibodies, not against them."

For operations evaluating vaccine options, vaccine formulation can influence how effectively calves respond, especially when maternal antibodies are still present. Products formulated with the MetaStim adjuvant, like PYRAMID vaccines, are designed to stimulate a balanced, robust immune response in calves as young as 30 days of age.¹

Vaccination results can vary based on management – The best prevention against BRD doesn't begin at vaccination — it begins long before that. Early life management decisions influence how resilient calves remain as stress comes and goes.

"For dairy calves, those first couple of hours and days matter in

terms of colostrum, bedding, hygiene, and feed,” noted Dr. Vlietstra. “It’s hard to get that time back if a mistake is made or something is missed. Many of the dairy calves we see that are treated for pneumonia were previously caught and treated for diarrhea. Being able to watch those calves closely and adjust quickly gives you the best chance of having a healthy calf.”

In stocker and feedlot systems, groups of calves will arrive with varying health backgrounds. That history plays a significant role in how well a vaccination program performs.

“Many feedlots or stockers tend to have one protocol and give it no matter what kind of cattle are coming in,” shared Dr. Washburn. “The history of those calves matters — preconditioning, travel history, weather, where they came from. The same vaccination protocol can perform very differently, depending on those factors.”

Even within a closed dairy, a protocol that has previously achieved great results may shift in response to disease risk or seasonality.

“There are so many variables that can’t be fully predicted,” added Dr. Vlietstra. “You can have the same protocol year round, and it might work well in one season and struggle in another.”

Disease risk is dynamic, regardless of cattle type or age group. Because stress load, immune demand, and pathogen exposure are constantly shifting, prevention programs can’t remain static.

Both Dr. Washburn and Dr. Vlietstra recommend regularly reevaluating prevention strategies to keep protocols aligned with real-world conditions. Your herd veterinarian can help evaluate calf history, stress load, and vaccination timing to ensure respiratory disease prevention programs evolve with the realities calves face.

Preventing disease is always better than waiting for calves to show signs of illness. While proper animal husbandry and care are key to supporting calf health, vaccination remains central to managing bovine respiratory disease (BRD) and preventing permanent damage. To get the most out of any vaccination program, it’s important to understand how immunity develops.



Even within a closed dairy, a protocol that has previously achieved great results may shift in response to disease risk or seasonality.

Smart Management Leads to Stronger Parasite Control. Oklahoma producer and his veterinarian use hands-on pasture and herd management to strengthen parasite control for the long haul. For Oklahoma cow/calf producer Buck Rich, good deworming doesn’t end in the chute. It continues in the pasture, where grazing, forage height, and herd health play just as big a role in parasite control as the products they use.

“For me, parasites equal economics,” said Rich of Leaning Oak Ranch in Okemah, Oklahoma. “I look at the economic impact they have on our operation, everything from treating them to the damage they cause.”

Healthy pastures start with smart grazing – Together, Rich and his veterinarian, Tyler Thomas, DVM, owner and operator of Prague Veterinary Clinic in Prague, Okla., have fine tuned a proactive approach that keeps cattle productive and pastures thriving.

“Pasture management is probably the most important thing we do,” shared Rich. “A lot of old timers weren’t ranchers; they were grass farmers. And that holds true today.”

Healthy grass supports healthy cattle, and how it’s grazed can make or break parasite pressure on an operation. For Rich, that means keeping close watch on pastures, rotating herds regularly, and following a “take half, leave half” philosophy to protect forage quality and minimize parasite exposure.

Dr. Thomas noted that the link between grazing height and parasite load is one of the simplest, but most overlooked, aspects of cattle management.

“We know the vast majority of infective larvae are in the bottom four inches of forage,” stated Dr. Thomas. “If you keep your cows grazing above that, they’re not picking up nearly as many parasites.”

By carefully planning pasture rotation and avoiding overgrazing, it’s possible to disrupt parasite cycles and create healthier grazing environments for your herd.

“Overgrazing doesn’t just hurt your grass,” added Matt Washburn. “It increases parasite exposure and damages pasture health by compacting the soil and disrupting the root system. When that happens, it can take a long time for grass to recover.”

Turning good pasture practices into results takes commitment. Rich knows the key is staying involved — watching the land, reading the cattle, and adjusting when needed.

“We’re definitely a hands-on operation,” said Rich. “We don’t just kick cattle out and come back in a few months. Even if we’re not feeding, we’re checking cattle, checking pastures, and rotating as we can.”

Year round management builds resilient herds – Beyond the pasture, good management also means giving cattle what they need to stay healthy year round. Administering a consistent vaccination protocol, quarantining new arrivals, and using low stress handling all support an animal’s natural defense against parasite challenges.

“Good management isn’t a one time decision,” said Dr. Thomas. “It’s every choice you make throughout the year that adds up to healthier cattle.”

A veterinarian guided vaccination schedule helps protect against

Boehringer Ingelheim News continued on the next page

Boehringer Ingelheim News continued from the previous page

common respiratory and reproductive diseases that can compromise the immune system. Parasites will take advantage of cattle with weakened immunity, compounding the impact of other health challenges the animal may be facing. When cattle are healthy and well vaccinated, they're better equipped to resist parasite pressure and respond effectively to deworming treatments.

Stress management also ties directly into that approach. Stress from handling, overcrowding, temperature swings, or nutritional changes can weaken the immune system and make cattle more vulnerable to parasitic infection. Moving cattle calmly, minimizing loud noises, and avoiding the use of prods are all low stress handling techniques to consider.

Dr. Washburn added that quarantining new animals before they enter the main herd is another simple but powerful management step. New cattle can bring resistant parasites or unfamiliar diseases onto the operation. Keeping them isolated for observation, testing, and treating, if required, adds an extra layer of protection that helps maintain pasture health and prevents the introduction of new parasite populations.

Pair management with smart product choice – Strong management goes beyond daily decisions. It's also about knowing when to act. That includes using the right tools at the right time to complement grazing and herd health efforts. On Rich's operation, a no-withdrawal pour-on provides a convenient option for timely cleanup when cattle are being sorted or marketed.

"If we're sorting off a few open cows that need to go to town, we sometimes hit them with a dose of EPRINEX [eprinomectin]," shared Rich. "The no-withdrawal period is really convenient when we need to clean up the cattle before they ship."

That kind of flexibility — knowing when to treat, what to use, and how to support herd health year round — is what keeps both cattle

and operations productive.

"It's all about maximizing the profitability of the gain that's out there," said Dr. Washburn. "We've reached a point with our deworming products where we've got to do something to make them last. Focusing on holistic, sustainable deworming is a good way to do that."

Drs. Thomas and Washburn agree sustainable deworming isn't about doing more; it's about using every available tool in a thoughtful, strategic way. Management, along with diagnostics, refugia, and combination treatment, work together to help protect the effectiveness of today's dewormers and support long term herd health.

"As a producer, we've got to use every tool to our advantage," emphasized Rich. "The best way to show a profit at the end of the year is to not waste money. Don't let parasites waste your money."

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About *Boehringer Ingelheim*. *Boehringer Ingelheim* provides innovation for preventing and treating diseases in animals. The company offers a wide range of vaccines, parasite control products, and medicines for pets, horses, and livestock to veterinarians, animal owners, farmers, and governments. As a leader in animal health, *Boehringer Ingelheim* values that the health of humans and animals is deeply connected and strives to make a difference for people, animals, and society. Learn more at www.bi-animalhealth.com.



Management of pasture and herd health supports sustainable deworming.

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION **CATTLE REPRODUCTION WORKSHOP**

JUNE 1ST, 2026
9AM-5PM

Topics for the day will include:

- Establishing a breeding season
- Estrus Synchronization
- Pregnancy checking via palpation and blood tests
- Culling & animal selection
- AI vs natural breeding
- Along with hands on practice with reproductive tracts and live animals!



Registration will be \$10, which includes your lunch! See the link below for more information on how to register.

To register for the event visit: go.ncsu.edu/june2026reproduction

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Bailee Sheffield at 336-694-4158 ext. 5 or bailee_sheffield@ncsu.edu

*****IMPORTANT*** You have 15 days to submit your payment after you complete your registration. IF you fail to submit your payment, your ticket for the event will be released, and the next person in line for that county will be able to register.**

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER. IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF ANY ACCOMODATIONS PLEASE NOTIFY THE CASWELL COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE A MINIMUM OF 10 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT.



CATTLEMEN'S



UPDATE

Fewer Vegans, More Meat Eaters — What It Means for Beef

By JASLYN LIVINGSTON, *Cattlemen's Beef Board*

Not long ago, it felt like beef had a target on its back. Between headlines about plant based alternative proteins, questions about how cattle are raised, and shifting consumer preferences, there was a lot of speculation about beef's future. As a young rancher, I heard those conversations just like everyone else — and like many producers, I wondered what they might mean for our industry long term.

Today, the conversation looks very different.

Beef demand is strong, even as prices remain high and supplies are tight. And that strength isn't just anecdotal — it's backed by data. Beef Checkoff funded research like the Meat Demand Monitor (MDM), a monthly national survey of U.S. consumers, continues to show that consumers value beef for its taste and that eating satisfaction plays a major role in their purchasing decisions.

In fact, a report summarizing the MDM's findings from February 2020 to December 2025 shows that more than 85 percent of Americans today identify as meat consumers, and consumer willingness to pay for beef at retail has increased faster than inflation. Over that same period, the number of consumers identifying as vegetarian or vegan has declined from 14 percent to just 7 percent.

At the same time, broader food and nutrition trends are working in beef's favor. Protein continues to be top of mind for consumers, whether they're focused on overall health, weight management, or maintaining muscle as they age. Even the rise of GLP-1 medications has reinforced the importance of nutrient dense foods, with many users prioritizing protein to support their health goals.

I occasionally run ultramarathons and enjoy strength training, and I've experienced firsthand how important nutrition is when

you're pushing your body to its limit. Athletes often tailor their diets carefully, focusing on complete protein to support muscle development and recovery. Increasingly, more Americans — even non-athletes — are thinking about food in those same terms.

That trend plays directly to beef's strengths as a flavorful, nutrient dense protein. It's also reflected in the continued recognition of lean beef as part of a healthy dietary pattern in the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans, reinforcing what many of us in the industry have long known: beef can absolutely be part of a healthy lifestyle.

That recognition doesn't happen by accident. Research and education play an important role in helping consumers access accurate information about beef. Producers are investing in nutrition research through the Beef Checkoff, and that research continues to explore beef's role in healthy dietary patterns. Meanwhile, outreach to health professionals helps ensure science-based information reaches the people influencing what we eat.

On our ranch, we've seen that demand play out firsthand. Cattle prices have remained strong for the past two years. That's a welcome change from years when we hoped to simply break even after accounting for feed, fuel, and other input costs. Strong cattle prices reflect the reality that supplies are tight and demand for finished beef remains strong. Conversations with my neighbors suggest many operations are experiencing the same.

However, strong demand today doesn't guarantee strong demand tomorrow. That's why continued investment in building demand, expanding market opportunities, and strengthening consumer trust matters.

Like many producers, I think a lot about what it will take to keep family operations viable for the next generation. Recent devastating wildfires near our ranch here in Nebraska are a reminder of just how quickly challenges can arise — and how deeply they can affect our communities. While there's no single solution, continued investment in building demand, expanding market opportunities, and strengthening consumer trust plays an important role in helping keep operations viable and our industry strong.

As I take on a larger role in our family ranch, I'm encouraged — not just by where beef demand stands today, but by the factors supporting it. My generation of cattle producers takes the future of this industry seriously. We want the opportunity to pass down healthy, viable operations to the next generation — just as previous generations did for us.



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Trending in Food & Media

BURGERS IN THE HEADLINES



McDonald's new Big Arch burger received more than 1,300 news media mentions and more than 13,000 social media mentions from February 13 through the debut at U.S. locations on March 3.¹



The Big Arch is the biggest burger ever offered on McDonald's menu. It has half a pound of beef, three slices of white cheddar and both crispy and slivered onions.²



Burger King changed the Whopper for the first time nearly 10 years based on guest feedback. The new Whopper features a premium bun and is served in a box.³

NEWS & NOTES



Bloomberg wrote several stories about beef demand and the cattle industry in February. The main article led with the headline, *Americans can't quit steak, no matter the cost.*⁴



A TikTok food trend known as 'boy kibble' that is based on ultra-simple, high protein meals often with Ground Beef received significant media attention with more than 370 news mentions in February.¹⁵



Beef Shank experienced a 309% increase in news and social media mentions in February. One key factor was a braised Beef Shank served at the Super Bowl.¹⁶

WINTER GAMES



Outside Magazine and other outlets profiled American bobsledder and gold medalist Elana Meyers Taylor and how she relies on bolognese with Ground Beef while training.⁷



More than 510 news outlets with a reach of 152 million shared an Issues Management & Public Relations (IMPR) team release with Italian recipes featuring beef.¹



The IMPR team also worked with chef and influencer Marcia Smart on a satellite media tour with television stations showcasing the recipes in the release.⁸

ARMS #030526-09

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Funded by
the Beef Checkoff



BEEF CUTS

AND RECOMMENDED COOKING METHODS

CHUCK		RIB	LOIN	SIRLOIN	ROUND	INGREDIENT CUTS	
Arm Chuck Roast 	Cross Rib Chuck Roast 	Prime Rib Roast 	Porterhouse Steak 	Top Sirloin Steak LEAN	Top Round* LEAN	Kabobs* 	
Arm Chuck Steak 	Shoulder Roast LEAN	Ribeye Steak, Bone-In 	T-Bone Steak 	Top Sirloin Petite Roast LEAN	Top Round Steak* LEAN	Stew Meat 	
Blade Chuck Roast 	Shoulder Steak* LEAN	Back Ribs 	Strip Steak, Bone-In LEAN	Top Sirloin Filet LEAN	Bottom Round Roast LEAN	Strips 	
Blade Chuck Steak* 	Ranch Steak LEAN	Ribeye Roast, Boneless 	Strip Steak, Boneless LEAN	Coulotte Roast 	Bottom Round Steak* LEAN	Cubed Steak 	
7-Bone Chuck Roast 	Flat Iron Steak 	Ribeye Steak, Boneless 	Strip Petite Roast LEAN	Coulotte Steak LEAN	Bottom Round Rump Roast LEAN	Ground Beef and Ground Beef Patties 	
Chuck Center Roast 	Top Blade Steak 	Ribeye Cap Steak 	Strip Filet LEAN	Tri-Tip Roast LEAN	Eye of Round Roast LEAN	Shank Cross-Cut LEAN	
Denver Steak 	Shoulder Petite Tender LEAN	Ribeye Petite Roast LEAN	Tenderloin Roast LEAN	Tri-Tip Steak LEAN	Eye of Round Steak* LEAN	Tenderloin Tips 	
Chuck Eye Roast LEAN	Shoulder Petite Tender Medallions LEAN	Ribeye Filet LEAN	Tenderloin Steak (Filet Mignon) LEAN	Petite Sirloin Steak 	Brisket Flat LEAN	Inside Skirt* 	
Chuck Eye Steak 	Short Ribs, Bone-In 			Sirloin Bavette Steak 	Brisket Point 	Flank Steak* LEAN	
Country-Style Ribs 						Short Ribs, Bone-In* 	
		KEY TO RECOMMENDED COOKING METHODS					
				*Marinate before cooking for best results			
				LEAN These cuts meet the government guidelines for lean, based on cooked servings, visible fat trimmed.		LEAN A cut of cooked fresh meat is considered "lean" when it contains less than 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat and less than 95 mg of cholesterol per 100 grams (3 1/2 oz) and per RACC (Reference Amount Customarily Consumed), which is 85 grams (3 oz).	

BEEF

Beef Promotion and Research Program

PRIVATE TREATY SALES CHECKOFF INVESTMENT FORM

Information is required by (7 CFR 1260.201). Failure to report can result in a fine.

Information is held confidential (7 CFR 1260.203).

Today's Date: _____

Seller's Name: _____

Buyer's Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Seller's Signature: _____

Buyer's Signature: _____

Both the seller & the buyer are responsible for making sure that the \$1.50 per head assessment is collected and remitted to the Beef Promotion & Research Board.

Total Number of Cattle Sold: _____ x \$1.50 Per Head = \$ _____

Date of Sale: _____

Person remitting assessment form:

Seller

☐

Buyer

☐

* State of Origin of Cattle: _____

* If cattle purchased came from another state within the last 30 days, indicate from which state the cattle were purchased.

Send Report and Remittance to:
SOUTH CAROLINA BEEF COUNCIL
P.O. Box 11280
Columbia, SC 29211

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0093. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1.8 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

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Zinpro Releases 2025 Sustainability Report. The Beef. It's Company Strengthens Commitment to Fortify the Future. Zinpro Corporation, the world's leading innovator and manufacturer of high performance organic trace minerals and animal nutrition solutions, recently announced the release of its 2025 Sustainability Report, highlighting meaningful progress across environmental stewardship, innovation, social impact, and industry collaboration.

Titled *Bringing the Zinpro Effect to Life*, the report outlines how Zinpro is strengthening its long standing commitment to Fortify the Future by delivering measurable improvements for people, animals, and the planet.

"At Zinpro, continuous improvement and dreaming big are foundational values that guide how we operate," said Zinpro President and CEO Rob Sheffer. "This report reflects that focus as we continue to expand sustainability across every layer of our business, from manufacturing and product innovation to partnerships and community engagement."

Measurable Environmental Progress – The 2025 report documents significant progress in reducing the company's environmental footprint through focused investments in efficiency, water stewardship, and waste mitigation:

- 9 percent reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions intensity driven by energy efficiency and process optimization initiatives.
- 22 percent reduction in total water withdrawals and a 24 percent improvement in water intensity across North American manufacturing sites.
- 51 percent of total waste diverted from landfills, establishing a strong baseline for continued improvement.

The report also highlights investments in manufacturing upgrades and renewable energy, including increased efficiency and expanded use of solar power in our Brazil facility.

Innovation that Drives Sustainable Outcomes – Grounded in science, Zinpro continues to advance sustainability through innovation that improves animal health, performance, and nutrient utilization. In early 2026, the company reached a milestone of 400 peer reviewed research publications, underscoring more than five decades of scientific leadership in animal nutrition.

"Science is the driver behind everything we do," said Manoella Alves, global director of sustainability at Zinpro. "Our research, products, and partnerships are designed to deliver practical, data backed solutions that help customers meet their sustainability goals while strengthening their businesses."

Zinpro technologies demonstrated measurable sustainability benefits across species, including improved feed efficiency, reduced emissions intensity, and enhanced animal health outcomes, which help producers achieve stronger economic and environmental performance simultaneously.

Strengthening Social Impact and Responsible Business Practices – The 2025 Sustainability Report details the company's continued focus on people, both within the organization and across the communities it serves:

- Launch of the Zinpro Supplier Code of Conduct, extending the company's core values and ethical expectations throughout its global supply chain.

- Expanded employee wellbeing programs, including mental health programming, complete safety initiatives, and employee engagement.

- 3,979 volunteer hours logged in 2025, reinforcing employee commitment to serving generously.

- Continued investment through the Anderson Foundation, supporting education, safe water access, and leadership development for girls and women globally.

Looking Ahead – The 2025 Zinpro Sustainability Report establishes clear baselines and reinforces the company's commitment to setting improvement targets, evaluating on-farm sustainability impacts, and continuously reducing its own operational footprint.

Review and download the full Zinpro 2025 Sustainability Report at zinpro.com/sustainability.

Improve Reproductive Outcomes with Trace Mineral Nutrition.

Help cows breed earlier, tighten the calving window, and improve profitability potential. In cow/calf operations, reproductive success comes down to timing. A calf born just a few weeks earlier can mean significantly more weight at weaning, tighter calving groups, and improved lifetime performance.

"More calves born earlier in the calving season is the number one thing we can do to drive positive economic outcomes," said Clay Burson, Ph.D., associate beef technical specialist, Zinpro. "Based on current market value, backing a calf up just one calving period can cost more than \$150 per head and nearly \$380 per head if delayed further, driven largely by lost weaning weight.¹"

Trace mineral nutrition plays a critical role in the biological



ZINPRO®

NEWS

processes that drive fertility and conception.

Mineral's role in reproductive performance – “We have a real challenge in the beef industry with early embryonic mortality,” said Dr. Burson. “We lose a lot of pregnancies and back cows up in the calving season.”

Research on embryo retention has shown measurable improvements when optimizing trace mineral strategies. In some cases, embryo retention improved by up to 18 percent during early gestation, helping more pregnancies carry through critical early stages.²

Studies have also demonstrated improvements in first service A.I. conception rates. Even modest gains can meaningfully shift more cows into earlier calving groups.²

“Getting her bred the first time is great,” said Dr. Burson. “Having more calves born earlier is even better.”

Over time, these reproductive improvements contribute to greater herd longevity and consistency.

“Keeping a cow in the herd year after year and keeping her on the front end of the calving season is the key to unlocking profitability,” Dr. Burson added.

Those improvements depend not just on what is fed but on how effectively those nutrients are delivered and used.

Getting minerals where they matter – Trace minerals play a critical role at the cellular level, supporting processes such as enzyme activity, protein synthesis, and tissue development. When trace minerals are effectively absorbed, those cellular functions translate into measurable reproductive outcomes.

“If we feed a great quality trace mineral source and get it to the cell where it's needed, that leads to things we can measure – more cows bred, healthier cattle, and ultimately positive economic outcomes,” said Dr. Burson.

However, not all trace mineral sources behave the same in the digestive system. Form, stability, and interactions with other diet ingredients can influence how much is ultimately utilized.

“It's not just about being available to the animal but actually eliciting a positive response in performance,” he explained.

In some cases, antagonisms in the diet or environment can limit trace mineral absorption, reducing effectiveness. This reinforces the importance of bioefficacy when choosing a trace mineral source, especially during stressful periods like reproduction.

From preventing deficiency to supporting performance – In addition to trace mineral source, it's also important to consider inclusion levels, particularly when the goal is to support reproductive performance.

“The baseline nutrient requirements for trace minerals were put together 30 or 40 years ago and are designed to prevent signs of deficiency, not to optimize performance,” said Dr. Burson.

However, today's beef cow is not the same as she was decades ago. She is larger, consumes more feed, and produces more milk, placing greater demands on the biological processes tied to fertility, conception, and pregnancy maintenance.

“Trace minerals such as Zinpro Availa Zn play a key role in supporting those processes, influencing hundreds of enzyme systems and thousands of metabolic pathways that impact reproduction and overall performance,” said Dr. Burson.

To better support reproductive outcomes, trace mineral strategies should move beyond simply preventing deficiency and instead align inclusion levels with today's production demands.

Trace minerals play a critical role in supporting fertility, conception, and pregnancy retention. When aligned with overall nutrition and management, they can help drive earlier conception, maintain pregnancies, and improve herd productivity.

For more insights on improving reproductive efficiency and trace minerals, visit zinpro.com/beef.

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About ZinPro. For more than 54 years, Zinpro has improved the health and well being of both animals and people as a pioneer in the research and development of performance trace minerals and innovative nutritional solutions. As a family owned, privately held company, our steady growth can be attributed to employing a world class team of experts, manufacturing quality products, and our steadfast commitment to helping our customers advance the health and performance of their animals. With products marketed in more than 70 countries worldwide, Zinpro is the global leader in advancing animal performance through greater nutrition and is dedicated to creating smarter practices for a better, more sustainable world. To learn more, visit zinpro.com.

West End Precast

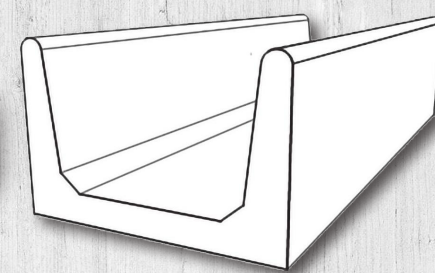
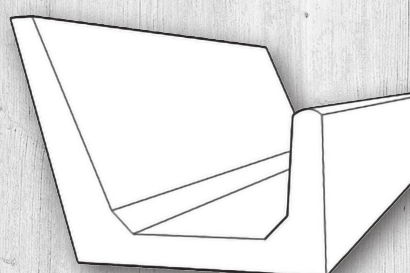
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Alltech® NEWS

DairyKind, UC Davis CLEAR Center, and Alltech collaborate to create bilingual videos on cattle sustainability.

DairyKind, the UC Davis CLEAR Center, and Alltech have collaborated to develop a pair of educational videos focused on clarifying what sustainability means within the cattle industry. The videos deliver the same core content, with one presented in English and the other in Spanish. This ensures greater accessibility and provides a valuable educational resource for Spanish speaking audiences across the industry.

While the term “sustainability” is widely used in the industry, it is often misunderstood or interpreted inconsistently. These videos provide an accessible, science based resource to help producers, industry professionals, and other stakeholders better understand sustainability in the context of cattle production. Intended to serve as an educational tool that supports informed discussions, training efforts, and improved communication across the industry, the videos can be incorporated into training programs, used as a stand alone learning resource, or integrated into onboarding training processes at dairy and beef operations across the United States.

“Sustainability can sound like a high level industry goal, but it’s implemented by the men and women working with cattle every day,” said DairyKind’s Michelle Schack, DVM. “Through DairyKind’s training programs, we prioritize helping farm employees understand not just what to do, but why it matters. These videos provide a clear, science based foundation that connects big sustainability concepts to everyday actions on cattle operations.”

“The people who care for animals on farms and ranches every single day are at the heart of sustainability. When we invest in them and educate and empower them, we strengthen our farms and ranches not just for today, but for future generations,” said CLEAR Center director Dr. Frank Mitloehner. “This video underscores the fact that sustainability isn’t just about numbers and requirements;

it’s about the people doing the work and making responsible decisions every day that sustain agriculture for future generations.”

“Our dairy and beef workers are the often unsung heroes of our industry, yet they are a vital pillar of true sustainability. While conversations about sustainability frequently focus on environmental and economic factors, it is essential to recognize and celebrate the people who care for our animals every day,” said Jorge Delgado, who provides training and talent development for dairy workers as part of the Alltech On-Farm Support People+ program. “This video aims to give voice to these dedicated individuals, making them feel valued and empowered as integral contributors to building a more sustainable future. This partnership with UC Davis and DairyKind comes at the right moment, when individuals working with the animals in our industry need to understand that they form a part of a bigger picture: feeding the nation.”

Both videos are available on the CLEAR Center’s YouTube channel — @CLEARCenteratUCDavis — under the titles *The Farmers Behind a Sustainable Future* and *Los agricultores detrás de un futuro sostenible*. They will also be featured on DairyKind’s platform dairykind.com as part of the company’s training and educational resources, and they will be incorporated into the Alltech On-Farm Support training modules.

For more information, visit dairykind.com, clear.ucdavis.edu, or alltech.com.

2026 Alltech Agri-Food Outlook shares global feed production survey data.

Alltech has released its *2026 Agri-Food Outlook*, a report that includes the results of the company’s annual global feed production survey. Based on that data, global feed production in 2025 reached an estimated total of 1.44 billion metric tons (mt) — representing an increase of 2.9 percent and 40.136 million mt from 2024. Most regions and sectors experienced growth, and the numbers suggest a strong recovery phase for animal agriculture; however, the data show that growth was uneven, increasingly regionalized, and driven less by herd expansion than by structural change, productivity gains, and shifts in how production is measured and recorded.

Now in its 15th year, the annual survey that serves as the foundation of the Alltech Agri-Food Outlook report collected data from 142 countries and 38,837 feed mills in late 2025. By analyzing compound feed production and prices — collected by Alltech’s global sales team and in partnership with feed associations and official data collecting organizations — the survey provides a comprehensive snapshot of global feed production. These insights serve as a barometer for the overall livestock industry, highlighting key trends across species, along with regional challenges and opportunities for growth.

To access more data and insights from the *2026 Alltech Agri-Food Outlook*, including an interactive global map, visit alltech.com/agri-food-outlook.

About Alltech. Founded in 1980 by Irish entrepreneur and scientist Dr. Pearse Lyons, Alltech delivers smarter, more sustainable solutions for agriculture. Our diverse portfolio of products and services improves the health and performance of animals and plants, resulting in better nutrition for all and a decreased environmental impact.

Headquartered just outside of Lexington, Ken., Alltech serves customers in more than 140 countries, has five bioscience centers, and operates more than 75 manufacturing facilities across the globe. For more information, visit alltech.com.



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The CEO's Corner



Stewardship Pays – Because Dairy Farmers Make It That Way

By GREGG DOUD, National Milk Producers Federation

In the dairy business, feel good attitudes don't keep the lights on. Margins do.

That's why U.S. dairy producers' status as stewardship leaders, one reflected every day in smart business decisions, matters so much — not as a public relations exercise, but as a powerful, hard earned advantage that strengthens productivity, manages risk, and improves profitability by putting farmers in the driver's seat of innovation.

Public discussion about agriculture at times treats stewardship and profitability as parallel conversations. One is about social responsibility — whatever that may mean — while the other is about returns. A dairy farmer's reality is very different. On dairies, stewardship is a business strategy that improves efficiency, manages risk, and strengthens U.S. dairy's competitiveness at home and abroad. Its success hinges upon being farmer led, incentive based, and grounded in economics rather than mandates.

Efficiency has always been the foundation. To use a recent buzzword, you know what "regenerative ag" is to me? It's the stuff my dad has emphasized on the farm for the past 50 years, and it's stuff dairy farmers do every day.

Investments in genetics, nutrition, and cow comfort have dramatically increased milk output per cow over generations, to the point where one cow today produces five times as much milk as her counterpart did at the end of World War II. That lets farms produce

more milk with fewer animals and fewer inputs. It improves margins by reducing feed costs per unit of production. And that, along the way, lowered the environmental footprint of producing milk; since 2007, U.S. dairy farmers have seen a 14.7 percent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions intensity from cradle-to-farm gate. These productivity gains aren't a slogan to save the planet — they're a core economic outcome, and they've saved family farms.

Manure management offers one of the clearest examples of stewardship paying off. Precision nutrient application, improved storage, and data driven planning help farmers capture more value from nutrients they already own. Replacing purchased fertilizer with managed manure reduces input costs and stabilizes crop yields. What may once have looked to some farmers like an environmental obligation has become what the smart ones always knew it would be: a balance sheet asset, driven by efficiency.

S.C. Cattle Receipts, Trends, and Prices
for the Month of MARCH 2026

Cattle Receipts: 9,064 • Previous Month: 6,462
Feeder supply - 19% steers • 40% heifers • 41% bulls

SLAUGHTER CLASSES

	Avg. Wt.	Price
Cows - % Lean		
Breaker	1,386	\$173.05
Boner	1,167	\$172.61
Lean	1,141	\$152.93
Bulls - Yield Grade 1-2	1,609	\$198.39

FEEDER CLASSES

FEEDER STEERS (Medium and Large 1-2)

Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	417	517.31	\$2,157.18
450-500	471	481.09	\$2,265.93
500-550	522	444.28	\$2,319.14
550-600	570	431.36	\$2,458.75
600-650	619	393.61	\$2,436.45
650-700	673	389.54	\$2,621.60

FEEDER BULLS (Medium and Large 1-2)

Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	420	501.04	\$2,104.37
450-500	470	480.39	\$2,257.83
500-550	519	442.85	\$2,298.39
550-600	573	418.94	\$2,400.53
600-650	617	384.03	\$2,369.47
650-700	673	360.05	\$2,423.14

FEEDER HEIFERS (Medium and Large 1-2)

Wt. Range	Avg. Wt.	CWT	Avg. Price
400-450	424	463.88	\$1,966.85
450-500	462	441.11	\$2,037.93
500-550	519	406.81	\$2,111.34
550-600	571	378.46	\$2,161.01
600-650	617	352.46	\$2,174.68
650-700	680	340.20	\$2,313.36

Source: S.C. Department of Agriculture - USDA Market News Service
Columbia, S.C. - 803-737-4491

Anaerobic digesters are another example. They're not cheap, but when properly scaled and paired with the right revenue streams, a well designed digester that turns methane into natural gas can pay for itself within 5–8 years, according to Penn State Extension and AgSTAR research. In 2026, it's not uncommon for a dairy producer to get checks for selling milk, beef, and energy. That's diversification. That's innovation. That's smart stewardship.

Dairy's ag leading stewardship, which can include everything from water recycling to LED lighting, doesn't just help on-farm. Sustainability has become part of the trade conversation as American dairy exports have grown. Global buyers increasingly ask how food is produced as well as its price. Thanks to the leadership of its own farmers, the U.S. dairy industry holds a meaningful advantage.

Stewardship strengthens export competitiveness. Because the U.S. can produce more milk with fewer cows, less land, and fewer inputs, U.S. cheese and dairy ingredients compete globally on both cost and credibility.

A comparison with the European Union, the biggest U.S. export rival, is instructive. EU dairy producers operate under far more prescriptive environmental regulations that often impose fixed requirements regardless of farm size, geography, or economics. These mandates raise costs and discourage innovation, creating a mindset of doing the minimum needed for compliance. That's light years away from U.S. dairy's culture of continuous improvement, which thrives through a voluntary, incentive based approach that lets farmers innovate, scale solutions, and improve efficiency in ways that keep costs lower and deliver environmental benefits.

U.S. dairy's ability to demonstrate real, measurable progress without locking producers into rigid systems enhances the entire industry — and keeps environmental standards from becoming tools to exclude American products or create limitations on the wide

variety of business models that help our dairy farms thrive.

Stewardship also supports supply chain reliability. Farms that invest in nutrient efficiency, water management, and energy resilience are better positioned to withstand weather variability and input shocks. That stability flows through processors to international customers who want consistency as much as sustainability.

The common thread through all of this is farmer leadership.

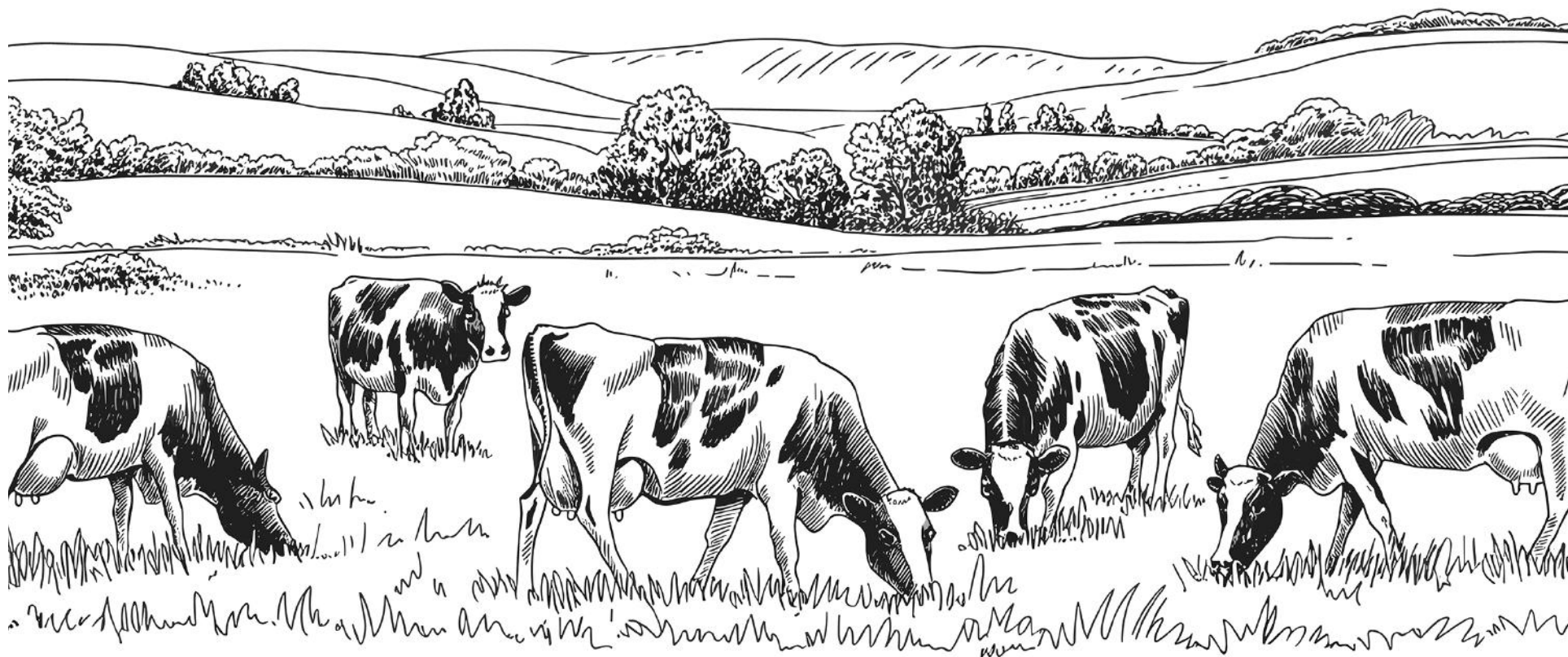
American dairy stewardship is impressive. Just as important is how it's been achieved — through voluntary, incentive based programs that respect farmers as problem solvers and avoid the heavy hand of government regulation. Cost sharing, technical assistance, and market incentives reduce upfront risk and preserve farmer flexibility. Farmers choose systems that fit their herd size, geography, and business model instead of forcing compliance with one-size-fits-all mandates that may not deliver results.

This approach has allowed dairy farmers to make stewardship a key to profitability that has reduced emissions, improved efficiency, and strengthened their businesses — not because they were forced to, but because the incentives made economic and business sense.

U.S. dairy farmers have earned respect at home and abroad for their stewardship — and they've certainly earned their living. They've shown how private sector, incentive led solutions fuel profits and build trust over decades, setting them up for more progress in the decades to come — if left to do what they do best.

Buzzwords and trends come and go. Policy discussions evolve. Through all of it, dairy producers continue to evolve as stewards because they're smart business owners, insightful innovators, and responsible operators. They will ensure their farms are efficient, productive, and profitable, and they will leave their farms to the next generation in better shape than they found it.

That's stewardship. That's leadership. That's dairy farming.





NMPF
NATIONAL MILK
PRODUCERS FEDERATION

NEWS

NMPF Heads West for Board Meeting Tackling Labor, Celebrating Whole Milk. The National Milk Producer Federation's (NMPF) first March Board of Directors Meeting outside the Beltway brought fresh Arizona air — and innovative ideas — to critical discussions for the future of days.

“Committee and full board discussions on labor, economics, and animal health highlighted the two day format of intense discussions and presentations held in Scottsdale. The successful new format both reduced travel burdens and costs for members while providing new opportunities to share staff updates and expertise with dairy leaders.

“We have a great team that’s doing a great job,” said NMPF President & CEO Gregg Doud. “We are not letting off of the gas.”

Attendees had much to celebrate in terms of wins over the past few months, including the enactment of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act and favorable recognition of dairy’s nutritional benefits in the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Still, critical work remains on contentious topics, including agricultural labor, a special focus at the meeting.

Key outcomes and action items from the meeting included:

- The Board approved the establishment of a Membership Committee to explore affiliate membership qualification, dues, and benefits. The committee will present recommendations at the June meeting.
- The board approved the development of an Enhanced Livestock Coverage Option, with further economic analysis to be presented at the June meeting.
- NMPF moved toward common member goals on ag labor policy based on discussion with the Immigration Task Force led by Agri-Mark Chairman and executive committee member Cricket Jacquier.
- Charles Krause of Minnesota and Jennifer Leech of Virginia were welcomed as new board members representing Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.

If any board members or cooperatives need targeted talking points on ag labor or other issues as they engage their elected officials, reach out to Trey Forsyth at tforsyth@nmpf.org and Maria Brockamp at mbrockamp@nmpf.org.

The next board meeting is set for June 8–10 at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City in Arlington, Virginia. The plan is for board members to attend committee meetings on June 8, with the board meeting the next day and Capitol Hill visits the final day. NMPF’s Animal Health and Well Being Committee is also meeting on June 10–11.

NMPF Secures Key Dairy Wins as House Farm Bill Advances. The 2026 Farm Bill, advanced by the House Agriculture Committee on March 5, includes several NMPF priorities, reflecting

the organization’s months of engagement with Chairman G.T. Thompson, R-Pennsylvania, and other dairy champions as the bill won wide, bipartisan committee approval.

Among provisions critical to strengthening dairy farmers and their cooperatives, the legislation authorizes long term dairy product processing cost surveys and extends essential programs such as Dairy Forward Pricing, Dairy Indemnity, and the Dairy Research and Promotion Program. The bill also reinforces voluntary, producer led conservation efforts, including targeted support for methane reducing practices.

NMPF secured forward looking trade provisions in the bill, including a long term directive for the U.S. government to protect common cheese names like “parmesan” and “feta” in trade negotiations, an effort introduced and championed by NMPF. The bill also included an NMPF request to formally move the Food for Peace program to USDA and designate \$200 million in annual funding for dairy based therapeutic foods to support global malnutrition efforts.

Additional victories include strengthened export promotion funding, expanded access to renewable energy programs for farmer owned cooperatives, broader dairy eligibility in nutrition incentive programs, and continued support for farmer mental health and on-farm safety.

As the farm bill process moves ahead, NMPF remains focused on building bipartisan momentum to deliver lasting results for America’s dairy farmers.

NMPF Debuts State Issues Digest. NMPF recently introduced its first ever *State Issues Digest*, a new publication designed to strengthen support for dairy farmers at the state level. The digest supports NMPF’s efforts to strengthen collaboration among states, better leverage shared resources, and respond more swiftly to emerging challenges.

Distributed monthly to interested members, the newsletter highlights key issues affecting U.S. dairy farmers and their cooperatives across the states.

The inaugural edition covers a range of topics, including the growing financial and operational impacts of extended producer responsibility laws on dairy cooperatives and processors. It also examines efforts to remove flavored milk from schools, expand E-Verify requirements for employers, increase raw milk sales, and more.

Readers can sign up at www.nmpf.org/subscribe and update their communication preferences to receive future editions of the digest.

New World Screwworm Draws Near, NMPF Prepares. As spring temperatures rise, the threat of New World screwworm making

its way into the U.S. is also increasing. NMPF is working with agencies and stakeholders to ensure dairy preparedness.

Infestations continue to push north toward the U.S.-Mexico border, with the closest currently active case about 150 miles from Texas; meanwhile, sterile flies are being released in Texas up to 50 miles from the Mexican border to help suppress populations before they can reach American livestock.

NMPF brought several key partners together recently for a webinar to share the latest on New World screwworm and what it means for U.S. dairy.

Three experts, Dr. Adis Dijab, associate deputy administrator for APHIS Veterinary Services; Dr. Sonja Swiger, professor and extension entomologist at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension; and Dr. T.R. Lansford III, deputy executive director and assistant state veterinarian at the Texas Animal Health Commission, walked through signs and symptoms of New World screwworm in livestock, the current status of the pest, and some practical steps farmers can take to stay ahead of it.

The experts also shared what treatment options are currently available for livestock and gave an overview of potential cattle movement requirements or restrictions in the event of an outbreak in the United States.

USDA and state agencies will take the lead in managing any outbreak. NMPF has provided feedback to APHIS on its emergency response plans for a U.S. screwworm infestation, and USDA is taking that feedback into account in order to incorporate it in its next response playbook draft.

During an outbreak, USDA handles movement between states, and individual states can add their own rules for moving livestock within their borders. Farmers can expect that animals will be subject to quarantine and movement restrictions in the areas closest to the infestation, including pre-movement animal health inspection and treatment when appropriate, based on standardized continuity of business New World screwworm animal health certification guidance. Most farmers should still be able to move their animals if they stick to the rules around inspections, treating wounds, paperwork, and good biosecurity.

FDA has expanded animal drug treatment options for New World screwworm through Emergency Use Authorizations. Most recently, FDA issued an EUA for a new topical spray for lactating dairy cows that comes with only a ten day milk withdrawal time. This is the first drug authorized for use to treat New World screwworm in lactating cattle.

NMPF will continue working with federal and state partners to ensure dairy farmers have the tools and support they need to keep their herds healthy.

NMPF Raises Supply Chain Challenges on Multiple Fronts. NMPF's Tony Rice took a central role in elevating serious supply chain issues from maritime reform to cargo theft before Congress and the White House in March as disruptions continue to threaten U.S. dairy exports.

Rice, NMPF's senior director of trade policy, recently testified before a House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust hearing on ocean supply chain challenges, laying out the stakes for dairy exporters.

"Dairy farmers milk their cows 365 days a year," Rice said. "For a dairy producer, these supply chain issues are not abstract policy concerns. When export shipments are delayed, cancelled, or become more expensive to move, the disruptions ripple back through the supply chain and ultimately affect farm income."

The U.S. dairy industry exported \$9.6 billion and three million metric tons of product last year, making reliable transportation vital to its economic well being. Yet exporters remain heavily dependent on a handful of foreign owned ocean carriers. Shipping disruptions ripple back through the supply chain and affect farm income.

Throughout the hearing, Rice relayed the industry's call for greater investment in domestic shipbuilding capacity, stronger Federal Maritime Commission oversight, and improved transparency from carriers on booking decisions.

Even as supply chain challenges persist, cargo theft of intermodal shipping containers is spiking as well. Rice represented the food and ag industry as part of a coalition of supply chain stakeholders in a recent meeting with the National Economic Council at the White House. The group pressed the administration for resources to combat organized criminal networks that break into containers in search of high value goods, with dairy exports caught in the crossfire.

In parallel, the NMPF and the USDEC are working with Congress to advance the bipartisan Combating Organized Retail Crime Act (CORCA), which would give the Department of Homeland Security new tools to track and apprehend offenders.

Members experiencing supply chain issues should contact Tony Rice at trice@nmpf.org.

U.S. Dairy Highlights USMCA Review Priorities. NMPF's Tony Rice joined a recent briefing hosted by the Congressional Agriculture Trade Caucus to emphasize the importance of the North American market for dairy producers and underscore the need to use the USMCA review process to resolve longstanding trade barriers that limit American dairy farmer access to key North American markets.

"The USMCA Joint Review presents an opportunity for the U.S. to strengthen the agreement and ensure Mexico and Canada live up to their commitments," Rice said. "Preserving tariff free access to Mexico is paramount, while measures to address Canada's failure to comply with its dairy obligations and Mexico's delayed implementation of its common name provisions are necessary for U.S. dairy producers to receive the full benefit of the agreement."

Canada has continued to manipulate its tariff rate quota administration in ways that effectively shut out U.S. dairy while also circumventing its USMCA disciplines on dairy protein exports. These violations undermine the market access that USMCA was designed to deliver.

Mexico, meanwhile, also has implementation gaps that require attention during the review even as it remains a positive trading partner. Specifically, Mexico still needs to incorporate certain USMCA common name commitments, which protect the ability of American producers to market their products like "feta," into

NMPF News *continued from the previous page*

its regulatory structures and take clearer steps to ensure that new restrictions are not imposed on U.S. cheese exports.

NMPF and the USDEC have been raising these concerns with members of Congress and the Administration throughout the lead up to renewal, and the Agriculture Trade Caucus has become an important venue for that work. The bipartisan caucus, which NMPF and USDEC helped launch in January 2024, regularly convenes briefings on challenges facing agricultural exporters and Congress' role in leveling the playing field.

NMPF and USDEC will continue to push to strengthen the agreement and ensure that the promises made to U.S. dairy farmers are kept as the three countries meet to discuss the future of the trade pact on July 1.

NMPF Opens Doors for Dairy in Ecuador Trade Deal. NMPF's sustained engagement with the U.S. government continues to pay off for American dairy farmers, with a new U.S.-Ecuador reciprocal trade agreement, signed on March 13, representing the latest in a string of hard fought market access wins.

The new deal would improve export opportunities for U.S. dairy products in a market long plagued by restrictive tariffs and nontariff trade barriers and would deliver on several dairy priorities. It would:

- Eliminate tariffs on a range of U.S. dairy products;
- Overhaul Ecuador's burdensome import licensing system; and
- Recognize U.S. regulatory oversight, including dropping facility listing requirements and accepting certificates from American regulatory authorities.

For cheese producers specifically, the deal protects 40 common cheese names, including "parmesan," blocking foreign competitors from monopolizing terms that U.S. producers depend on.

"With an unprecedented investment in U.S. dairy manufacturing capacity, deals like this are vital to making it easier for international buyers to source the great products our dairy companies are making," Gregg Doud said.

The Ecuador deal is the tenth agreement secured by the Administration that includes new market access for U.S. dairy products. NMPF and USDEC remain committed to working with USTR to support implementation and build on this momentum.

Getting Word Out Helps Boost DMC Numbers. After signup rates were lagging previous years for the Dairy Margin Coverage Program, a full court communications press from NMPF helped push enrollment levels above year ago levels, with an even higher percentage of dairy farmers participating as a proportion of U.S. dairy operations.

Participation in USDA's Dairy Margin Coverage program rose to 13,349 this year, up from 12,989 in 2025. Currently, 57 percent of dairy farms are enrolled, compared to 53 percent the previous year.

The gain came after a comprehensive NMPF effort to get the word out, which included staff appearances on RFD-TV, distributed news articles via the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, social media, NMPF's CEO's Corner column and President's Report from Gregg Doud, member alerts, and news releases.

This growth highlights that farmers continue to recognize the importance of this safety net and benefit from its support. Congress improved DMC as part of farm support provisions in last year's budget reconciliation bill, with an updated production history and an increase in the amount of milk covered under the program.

As that effort was underway, the February margin under USDA's Margin Coverage Program was generating another month of payments, with a reported margin for the month of \$8.46/cwt, up 65¢/cwt from the month before. Farmers who elected coverage at the maximum \$9.50/cwt level received a payment of \$1.04/cwt for the month.

An 80¢/cwt increase in the all milk price from January drove the higher margin, which was tempered by a 15¢/cwt gain in the February DMC feed cost formula, due primarily to a higher soybean meal price.

The DMC Decision Tool on the USDA website projected at the end of March that February's payment might be the year's last, other than a possible small one for March. USDA expected margins to average \$10.61/cwt for the year.

FARM Program Breaks Down Biosecurity Planning. The National Dairy FARM Program equipped farmers with the knowledge and resources to prepare for potential outbreaks during its session, "Where to Start: Building an Enhanced Biosecurity Plan," presented recently at the Central Plains Dairy Expo in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

FARM Biosecurity lead Miquela Hanselman, in partnership with Preventalytics owner Dr. Danelle Bickett-Weddle, instructed producers on how to identify risks specific to their herd.

FARM Biosecurity can help producers take the first steps towards developing an enhanced biosecurity plan:

- *Step one* – Address movement risks, such as animals, supply deliveries, and personnel.
- *Step two* – Complete a self assessment that includes questions regarding animal health and disease monitoring, animal movements and contacts, vehicles and equipment, personnel, and establishing a line of separation. This delineates a point of entry on farms and can help control on-farm movements. Each of these areas corresponds to the enhanced biosecurity plan.

- *Step three* – Create a daily biosecurity plan specific to your operation and gather essential information such as premises IDs and emergency contacts for the farm.

FARM also connected with the broader dairy community throughout the week, sharing free resources and talking to consumers about the great work that happens on dairy farms daily.

The FARM Program remains at the forefront of on-farm social responsibility initiatives, advancing U.S. dairy's mission of continuous improvement through industry outreach and education.

U.S. Dairy Statement on USTR National Trade Estimate Report. The NMPF, USDEC, and the Consortium for Common Food Names commended USTR for spotlighting persistent trade barriers facing U.S. dairy exporters in the 2026 National Trade Estimate report:

"Nearly one in every six pounds of milk produced in America is shipped to a customer overseas," Gregg Doud said. "When foreign

markets are closed off by bogus restrictions, the pain is felt directly on farms across this country. The administration's work through reciprocal trade negotiations to knock down these barriers is exactly the kind of advocacy American dairy farmers need, and we are grateful to see it reflected in this report."

"The inclusion of dairy trade barriers in this report and the administration's concrete action to address them through reciprocal trade negotiations sends a clear signal that the U.S. is serious about opening markets for American dairy exporters," Krysta Harden, president and CEO of USDEC, said. "Every unnecessary certification requirement dismantled, every unjustified facility registration eliminated, and every market access commitment secured through these agreements is a win for U.S. dairy. We thank the administration for confronting the barriers directly, and we look forward to building on that progress."

"The EU's common name confiscation campaign is one of the most cynical trade tactics in the world today, and we are grateful that this administration has made confronting it a priority," Jaime Castaneda, executive director of CCFN, said. "By documenting the EU's geographical indications agenda prominently in the NTE Report and pushing back against it in reciprocal trade negotiations, USTR is standing up for American producers of cheeses, wines, meats, and beers. We strongly encourage the administration to keep up the great work."

About the National Milk Producer's Federation. NMPF was organized in 1916 to provide a forum for dairy producers and the cooperatives they own to participate in public policy discussions. NMPF advocates policies to Congress, U.S. and foreign government agencies, industry organizations, the news media, and the public.

We use our unique resources to harness the ever changing climate in the politics and marketing of milk and dairy products from farm to table to promote the economic well being of dairy producers and their

cooperatives through coordinated industry efforts.

NMPF addresses policies concerning milk pricing, domestic and international market development, agriculture credit and taxation, environmental issues, food safety and health, animal welfare, product standards and labeling, and research and biotechnology.

Our mission is to foster an economic and political climate in which dairy producers and the cooperatives they own can thrive and prosper. Achieving such success assures consumers of adequate supplies of wholesome and nutritious dairy products at affordable prices.

This helps improve the bottom line of the associate members who provide services to dairy producers and cooperatives that they represent. For more information, visit www.nmpf.org.

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Crisis simulations to headline 2026 Stakeholders Summit.

When activist campaigns or viral moments erupt, the difference between chaos and control comes down to preparation. At the Animal Agriculture Alliance's 2026 Stakeholders Summit, public affairs and communications experts will guide attendees through crisis workshops and drills to pressure test their plans before an emergency strikes. The 2026 Summit, themed "High Steaks — Navigating Pressure on Animal Protein," is set for May 5–7 in Kansas City, Missouri.

During an interactive workshop titled "Pressure Testing Charting a Course Through Crisis Simulation," Summit Strategy Group's Nina Dater will lead participants through a realistic, activist driven scenario where they'll navigate every critical phase of a crisis. The session will reveal where organizations are most vulnerable under pressure and how to respond with clarity and confidence.

Leading up to the kickoff of the 2026 Summit, a special pre-event workshop will be led by communications professionals Jacque Matsen and Lauren Neuman. The hands-on session, "From Crisis to Clarity — Owning the Message When the Stakes Are High," will equip attendees with practical tools to communicate clearly, credibly, and calmly in even the toughest situations.

"The time is now to pressure test crisis response systems, not after the crisis strikes," said Hannah Thompson-Weeman, Alliance president and CEO. "There's no better way to test those systems than through practice with real world scenarios, guided by experts. This rare opportunity will provide Summit attendees with a practical framework and tools to manage any crisis with confidence."

Nina Dater is director of public affairs at Summit Strategy Group, where she advises clients on complex public affairs, regulatory, and reputational issues, with a focus on how legislative and government decisions impact corporate risk and crisis response. She works across industries to help organizations anticipate policy driven challenges and develop communications strategies aligned with business objectives.

Jacque Matsen, president and owner of Relate Strategies, LLC, has spent more than 20 years working on strategic communications efforts for prominent organizations and brands in the food and agriculture space, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, DuPont Pioneer, and the National Pork Board. She has supported industry responses to *E. coli* outbreaks, "Mad Cow" disease, and "pink slime," as well as launching the National Pork Board's myth busting efforts.

Lauren Neuman is the associate director of public relations at C.O.nxt. She has more than a decade of experience creating and

leading best-in-class communications programs that build meaningful relationships with stakeholders and drive business results. Her public relations experience spans media relations, community relations, issues management, and corporate communications in industries including B2B, hospitality, agriculture, and meat processing.

Learn how to prepare for and recover from an animal rights activist attack at the 2026 Stakeholders Summit. Monitoring the activities of adversarial groups remains at the forefront of the Alliance's work," said Abby Kornegay, director, issues and engagement. "Part of this includes sharing key findings and insights to keep agriculture stakeholders informed — and there's no better place to learn more than the annual Summit."

When farms are targeted by physical intrusions, cyber incidents, or viral misinformation, the impact can be immediate and overwhelming. During a fireside chat at the 2026 Summit, agricultural futurist Andrew Rose, cybersecurity strategist Kristin King, and farmer Jonathan Lawler will share firsthand experiences navigating crisis and recovery. Through candid discussion, the session will explore how awareness, decisive leadership, and coordinated response can turn moments of disruption into resilience, equipping attendees with practical insights to recognize threats early, respond effectively, and rebuild trust across their operations and communities.

Following the fireside chat, a panel of speakers will address activism pressure bubbling under the radar. This session will spotlight emerging and less visible activism fronts that create real operational, legal, and reputational risk for animal agriculture. Challis Hobbs, executive director at Fur Commission USA, will share practical approaches to preparedness and on-farm security amid growing scrutiny of farming practices within the fur community. Kosher and halal expert Joe Regenstein, Ph.D., will examine legal and regulatory pressure following increased interest in religious processing practices. Tom Albert, government affairs lead at the Zoological Association of America, will share the overlap in activism pressure impacting zoos and aquariums — highlighting why early awareness and proactive risk management matter.

The 2026 Summit would not be possible without the support of sponsors, including U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, *Farm Journal*, Meatingplace, Watt, Cargill, Perdue Farms, Zoetis, American Feed Industry Association, Dairy Farmers of America, U.S. Soy, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc., Amick Farms, Aviagen, CoBank, Dairy MAX, Farm Credit Council, Mountaire Farms, National Pork Board, National Pork Producers Council, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Lamb Board, Cal-Maine Foods, Cobb-Vantress, LLC, Empirical, Hendrix Genetics, National Chicken Council, N.C. Farm Bureau, *Progressive Dairy*, Trans Ova Genetics, Tyson Foods, United Egg Producers, Vivayic, Eggland's Best, and Eocene Environmental Group.

About the Animal Agriculture Alliance. *The Alliance safeguards the future of animal agriculture and its value to society by bridging the communication gap between the farm and food communities. We connect key food industry stakeholders to arm them with responses to emerging issues. We engage food chain influencers and promote consumer choice by helping them better understand modern animal agriculture. We protect by exposing those who threaten our nation's food security with damaging misinformation. For more information, visit www.animalagalliance.org.*

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- May 2 — Whitestone Farm 33rd Annual Pasture Performance Tested Angus Bull & Female Sale, Aldie, Va.
- May 16 — Chessie Creek Farm & Black Creek Angus 4th Annual Bred Heifer Sale, Walterboro, S.C.
- Sep. 26 — Biltmore Fall Production Sale, Asheville, N.C.
- Oct. 17 — Fred Smith Company Ranch Extra Effort Sale, Clayton, N.C.
- Dec. 5 — 51st Annual Union County Performance Tested Bull Sale, Monroe, N.C.

2026

- Jan. 2 — 18th EBS Farms Select Bull & Female Sale, Norwood, N.C.

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- Jun. 6 — Carolinas Brahman Breeders Association 46th Annual Sale, Laurens, S.C.

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- May 22 — White Hawk Ranch Premium Frozen Genetics Auction, Buchanan Ga.
- May 23 — White Hawk Ranch Bull & Female Auction, Buchanon, Ga.
- May 25 — Georgia’s Big Event — The Mead Program Sale, Midville, Ga.
- May 30 — Four B Farms Fields of Gold Female Sale, Shelby, N.C.

RED ANGUS

- May 2 — 6th Annual SCHA • RAAC Joint Hereford & Red Angus Sale, Pendleton, S.C.

SANTA GERTRUDIS

- May 9 — Santa Gertrudis Breeders of the Carolinas Sale, Monroe, N.C.

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WAGYU

- Nov. 7 — Wilders Wagyu StayWILD’26 Production Sale, Turkey, N.C.

OTHER EVENTS

- May 6 — Alfalfa Production in North Carolina Workshop, Coats, N.C.
- May 6-7 — 2026 Artificial Insemination School for Undergraduates, Graduates, and DVM Students ONLY, Goldsboro, N.C.
- May 11 — SCCA Member Webinar
 - Utilizing Social Media on Your Cattle Operation
- May 15 — WNC Cattle Repro School, Waynesville, N.C.
- May 19 — Central N.C. Cattle Repro School, Reidsville, N.C.
- May 26 — Northwest N.C. Cattle Repro School, Reidsville, N.C.
- May 29 — Beat the Heat! Preparing Your Livestock for Summer Stress, Greenville, S.C.
- Jun. 1 — 2026 Mid-Central Cattle Reproduction School
- Jun. 6 — 2026 N.C. Beef System Field Day, Waynesville, N.C.
- Jun. 18 — Value Added Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Norwood, N.C.
- Jul. 7 — Forage & Livestock Annual Webinar Series - Session 1
- Jul. 15-16 — 2026 Tri-State Ag Expo, Clemson, S.C.
- Jul. 30-Aug. 2 — 2026 S.C. Junior Beef Round-Up, Clemson, S.C.
- Aug. 7-9 — 2026 N.C. Junior Beef Round-Up, Fletcher, N.C.
- Aug. 13 — Value Added Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Norwood, N.C.
- Aug. 19 — Forage & Livestock Annual Webinar Series - Session 2
- Sep. 17 — Forage & Livestock Annual Webinar Series - Session 3
- Sep. 24 — Value Added Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Norwood, N.C.
- Oct. 1 — Forage & Livestock Annual Webinar Series - Session 4
- Nov. 12 — Value Added Graded Feeder Cattle Sale, Norwood, N.C.

LIVESTOCK MARKET SALES

- May 4 — Harward Brothers Livestock Market Weekly Sale, Turnersburg, N.C.
- May 4 — Saluda Livestock Exchange Weekly Sale, Saluda, S.C.
- May 5 — Mid-Atlantic Cattle Sales Video Auction, via macsvideo.com
- May 6 — Northeast Georgia Livestock/Saluda Livestock Exchange/ Turner County Stockyard Video Auction, via negalivestock.com
- May 7 — Stanly County Livestock Market Weekly Sale, Norwood, N.C.
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- May 20 — Stanly County Livestock Market Weekly Sale, Norwood, N.C.
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