

FEEDLOT[®]



FEEDER INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Volume XXII Number 7

November 2014

Feedlot Focus

- Ethanol by-products deal just got better
- Probiotics and prebiotics make an impact in the feed yard and starting cattle
- Here it comes...get ready for WINTER

Management

- The feedlot lagoon that isn't
- Growing pains of the family business

Cow-calf Corner

- Ways to extend fall and winter grazing



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FEATURES



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We apologize for the error at our printer in last issue's Moly Mfg ad.

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Not so COOL

BY JILL J. DUNKEL

Ever beat your head against a wall?

It seems that's what many U.S. cattlemen are doing. Just before press time, the WTO ruled against the U.S. in a continuing dispute over meat-labeling rules that Canada and Mexico say discriminates against livestock exports from their countries.

A WTO panel Monday said the amended country-of-origin labeling requirements do violate global trade rules that require imports to be treated no less favorably than domestic products. This is the second time the WTO has ruled against COOL.

NCBA president Bob McCan said the ruling puts producers one step closer to facing retaliatory tariffs from Canada and Mexico. Since the rule began, a number of feedlots and packing plants closed,

likely due to the legislation.

"COOL is a failed program that will soon cost not only the beef industry, but the entire U.S. economy, with no corresponding benefit to consumers or producers," McCan said.

"NCBA has maintained that there is no regulatory fix to bring the COOL rule into compliance with our WTO obligations or that will satisfy our top trading partners. We look forward to working with Congress to find a permanent solution to this issue, avoiding retaliation against not only beef, but a host of U.S. products."

Canada has already released a list of products imported from the United States that may be targeted in response to the lack of compliance from the U.S. The list includes items like beef and swine, as well as their meat products, fruit, maple



syrup, chocolate, pasta, bread, frozen orange juice, ketchup, wine, wooden furniture and several other things.

The American Meat Institute (AMI) and North American Meat Association said, "The WTO decision upholding Canada's and Mexico's challenge to the U.S. COOL rule comes as no surprise. USDA's mandatory COOL rule is not only onerous and burdensome on livestock producers and meat packers and processors, it does not bring the U.S. into compliance with its WTO obligations."

Of course, consumer advocacy groups say shoppers should know where their beef and pork comes from.

I think this is far from over. Many expect the USDA to appeal the ruling, again.

AMI said while the U.S. has the option to appeal the ruling, they encourage USDA to instead work together with the industry and Congress to amend the COOL statute so that it complies with our international obligations and brings stability to the market. Such a change would help restore strong relationships with some of our largest and most important trading partners.

In the mean time, producers will continue to raise wholesome beef, just as they have done for decades.

This year, FEED•LOT magazine will have a special December issue focusing on industry issues and updates. Look for more information on COOL and other topics in that issue.

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The Ethanol By-Products Deal

JUST GOT BETTER

The use of corn ethanol by-products as feed supplement is common in some parts of the country where ethanol plants dot the landscape. But for those in other regions, or who have just not yet explored the options, now comes one more reason to jump on the by-product bandwagon. The dry distillers grain price recently dropped to a national average of just over \$100 per ton – a four year low.

BY TERRI QUECK-MATZIE

“In some places, that’s 95-98 percent of the price of corn,” says Kevin Gould, Michigan State University Extension Beef Educator, “and it’s been a long time since the price of distillers grains has been lower than the price of corn. That makes for a great opportunity for those not feeding by-product to give it a try.”

As corn is processed, it is mixed with yeast to produce ethanol and carbon dioxide. The ethanol is distilled off, and water is removed from the remaining liquid. The wet distillers grain (30-35 percent dry matter) can be fed as is, or more water can be removed to create a dry distillers grain. Wet distillers grain can generally only be shipped less than 100 miles.

Another product, distillers solubles, is often referred to as syrup because it has the consistency of maple syrup. It is popular paired with baled cornstalks. Dry distillers grains can make a good addition to crop residue grazing. “A little extra protein can dramatically increase digestibility of low quality feedstuffs like corn or soybean stover,” says Gould.

There are even products aimed at the stocker sector. Pellets are a formed, compressed version that can be fed in bunks or even on open ground. They are more expensive than loose forms, and that cost must be taken into account. “The key for stockers is cheap, efficient gains,” says Gould. “But they can supplement pasture, especially in the late fall when forage quality decreases.”

Feeding distillers grains is not new. DGs as they are called, are also a by-product of whiskey making. The first study on feeding DGs to cattle was published in 1907. The U.S. currently produces around 14.4 million tons a year.

The form and process of by-products determines the nutritional value, with variances from plant to plant due to fermentation process, grind, and even post-fermentation temperatures; but by-products generally retain most of the fat, protein, fiber, and minerals of the original grain source – most commonly corn. Low in starch, they have little or no effect on digestion; and multiple studies have shown virtually no difference



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in carcass quality or average daily gain in cattle fed by-products as opposed to corn. While some animals, hogs and chickens for instance, can only tolerate DG as a small portion of their diet due to the phosphorous content. Cattle can safely consume 40 percent or more in their rations. Though if feeding by-products for an extended period of time, you should consider a mineral supplement low in phosphorous and sulfur.

Gould cautions, it is best to consult a nutritionist for the exact mix for your stock. "Many plants are working to reduce fat percentages (some DG include as much as 11 percent crude fat)," says Gould. "As they do, that reduces energy levels, and you may want to increase the quantity. But when you do, you'll want to watch the moisture level." He says each plant can provide an analysis of its product, as well as the various products it can provide.

Gould says it's a balancing act, with the economics often providing the determining factor. And with the price dropping, the possibilities are increasing. If you live near multiple plants he suggests "price shopping" to find the best deal.

It's also important to develop a relationship with the plant marketing agent, who can alert you to the availability of "off spec" products.

"They're not the same as a typical product," explains Gould. "But they are generally much cheaper." There may have been a plant shutdown, or a drying problem that produced a one-time unique product that may still be usable – for cattle at least. Swine and poultry generally cannot utilize off spec products, leaving the door open for cattle feeders to capitalize on the availability.

"You have to be an opportunist and take advantage of the situation," he adds. "Try to get on the short list so you'll know when it happens."

Other factors to consider when purchasing by-product are on-farm



storage capacity (wet distillers grains, in particular, have a limited shelf-life and can spoil in 7-14 days), and the logistics of your feeding method through various seasons and weather patterns. Dry products last longer, but are generally more expensive.

Gould says the cost of by-products in all forms should remain rea-

sonable for the foreseeable future, and thus remain an economical choice for cattle feeders. "We all know what cattle prices have done, and now there's an opportunity to feed some cheap feed. We're looking at good times in the cattle business. As long as we make sure investments are well made, the only downside should be the tax bill." **FL**

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Probiotics & Prebiotics Make an Impact in the Feed Yard and Starting Cattle



BY JILL J. DUNKEL

Positive immune response. Increased feed efficiency. Better gut health. Reduced pathogens. Consumer confidence in wholesome beef.

Ask livestock nutritionists why probiotics and prebiotics are finding their way into more and more rations, and they could give you any of those answers. There are a number of products on the market today that have probiotic and prebiotic properties. Each have a niche in their mode of action, but they all seem to work toward animal well-being.

"The beef industry is looking for technologies that can benefit

animal health and production in a way that preserves the public trust in the wholesomeness of beef. One approach that is gaining momentum is the use of probiotics," says Kerry Barling, DVM, PHD, Global Manager Beef Technology for Lallemand Animal Nutrition.

"Most probiotics tend to balance the population of microbes so there is an overall beneficial effect of nutrient absorption and animal well being," Barlings says. One of the products from Lallemand Animal Nutrition, ProTernative, works in the small intestine affecting the microbial population. It aids in nutritional absorption and has

demonstrated an improvement in feed uptake and a decrease in pull rates for respiratory disease in highly stressed cattle.

"Research has shown a reduction in feedlot pulls and morbidity," he said. "If you get their gut healthy, cattle can fight disease easier and will get on feed faster."

One of the steps to getting the gut healthy includes balancing the pH in the digestive system.

J.B. Watson, Vice President of Life Products, Inc. says pathogenic bacteria thrive at a specific pH in the lower GI tract. By balancing the pH with probiotics, pathogenic bacteria growth is inhibited. ►



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WARNINGS: NOT FOR HUMAN USE. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. This product contains material that can be irritating to skin and eyes. Avoid direct contact with skin, eyes, and clothing. In case of accidental eye exposure, flush with water for 15 minutes. In case of accidental skin exposure, wash with soap and water. Remove contaminated clothing. Consult a physician if irritation persists. Accidental injection of this product may cause local irritation. Consult a physician immediately. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) contains more detailed occupational safety information.

For customer service or to obtain a copy of the MSDS, call 1-800-211-3573. For technical assistance or to report suspected adverse reactions, call 1-800-219-9286.

Not for use in animals intended for breeding purposes. The effects of florfenicol on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Toxicity studies in dogs, rats, and mice have associated the use of florfenicol with testicular degeneration and atrophy. NSAIDs are known to have potential effects on both parturition and the estrous cycle. There may be a delay in the onset of estrus if flunixin is administered during the prostaglandin phase of the estrous cycle. The effects of flunixin on imminent parturition have not been evaluated in a controlled study. NSAIDs are known to have the potential to delay parturition through a tocolytic effect.

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ADVERSE REACTIONS: Transient inappetence, diarrhea, decreased water consumption, and injection site swelling have been associated with the use of florfenicol in cattle. In addition, anaphylaxis and collapse have been reported post-approval with the use of another formulation of florfenicol in cattle.

In cattle, rare instances of anaphylactic-like reactions, some of which have been fatal, have been reported, primarily following intravenous use of flunixin meglumine.

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Probiotics... from previous page

"You make an environment that inhibits the growth of pH sensitive pathogenic bacteria," Watson says.

"It's a check-and-balance system. By lowering pathogenic bacteria, such as E. coli 0157:H7, you create healthier animals and a safer food supply."

Formula 10-G from Life Products contains a proprietary formulation of beneficial and viable lactic acid producing bacteria. It has an effect on bloat and acidosis by balancing the pH in the gut. "If ruminal pH and the GI pH is high, gasses are produced that causes animals to bloat. If the pH is too low, you get an acidic environment and animals go off feed," Watson explains. "When you keep a balanced pH, you get increased dry matter intake and better gains."

"The beef industry is looking for technologies that can benefit animal health and production in a way that preserves the public trust in the wholesomeness of beef. One approach that is gaining momentum is the use of probiotics."

— Kerry Barling, DVM, PHD,
Global Manager Beef
Technology for Lallemand
Animal Nutrition

Although probiotics and prebiotics have been around for decades, they are gaining in popularity. "It's a work in progress toward utilization of probiotics in cattle. I've been a vet for 30 years, and I've always had the viewpoint that probiotics are beneficial," Barling says.

"Now there is a better understanding of the results they yield and the mechanisms by how they work."

Barling also cites an environment where animal well-being and a safe food supply has become very important to consumers. "Some of the tools and management practices our industry use are closely followed by consumers. Probiotics tend to offer a natural solution that maintains the techno-

logical advantages while reducing the public's concern."

There are many probiotic and prebiotics on the market today. Here is a short list of some of the companies where you can find more information. There are many companies and suppliers who can serve your probiotic and prebiotic needs.

BioZyme
CHR Hansen
Diamond V
Lallemand
SweetPro

LifeProducts
Natur's Way
Novus International
Probios

Kevin Glaubius, Director of Nutrition and Technical Sales with BioZyme says consumers are increasingly sensitive to antibiotic use. Prebiotics offer producers an economical alternative to support animal health and animal performance.

Their VitaFerm products include the prebiotic, Amaferm, which research shows increases both the rumen fungi and the bacteria responsible for digestion. "The end result," he explains, "is improved digestibility by increasing the fermentation that naturally occurs in the rumen. In a fiber-based diet, an animal might only utilize 30 to 40% of the fiber, leaving considerable room for improvement. It ultimately helps producers with better utilization of the fiber, starch, and protein to support animal performance."

Another class of products with prebiotic-like effects include Original XP and XPC from Diamond V. These products promote a healthy balance of bacteria in the rumen which helps optimize rumen health and function. The products are not single compounds, but rather fermentation products composed of numerous functional metabolites together with beta-glucans and mannans to support animal health and performance. Craig Belknap, Beef Field Technical Specialist, says it not only supports rumen health and feed efficiency but also the immune system.

"Research from leading universities show a decreased pull rate of high risk cattle and lowers the incidence of morbidity," Belknap says. Historically, these products were used in mostly starting rations, however many producers are now feeding the products from receiving all the way through finishing.

With the increase in feed efficiency and gain from many probiotics and prebiotics, and with the current price of cattle, nutritionists are taking a hard look at the benefits

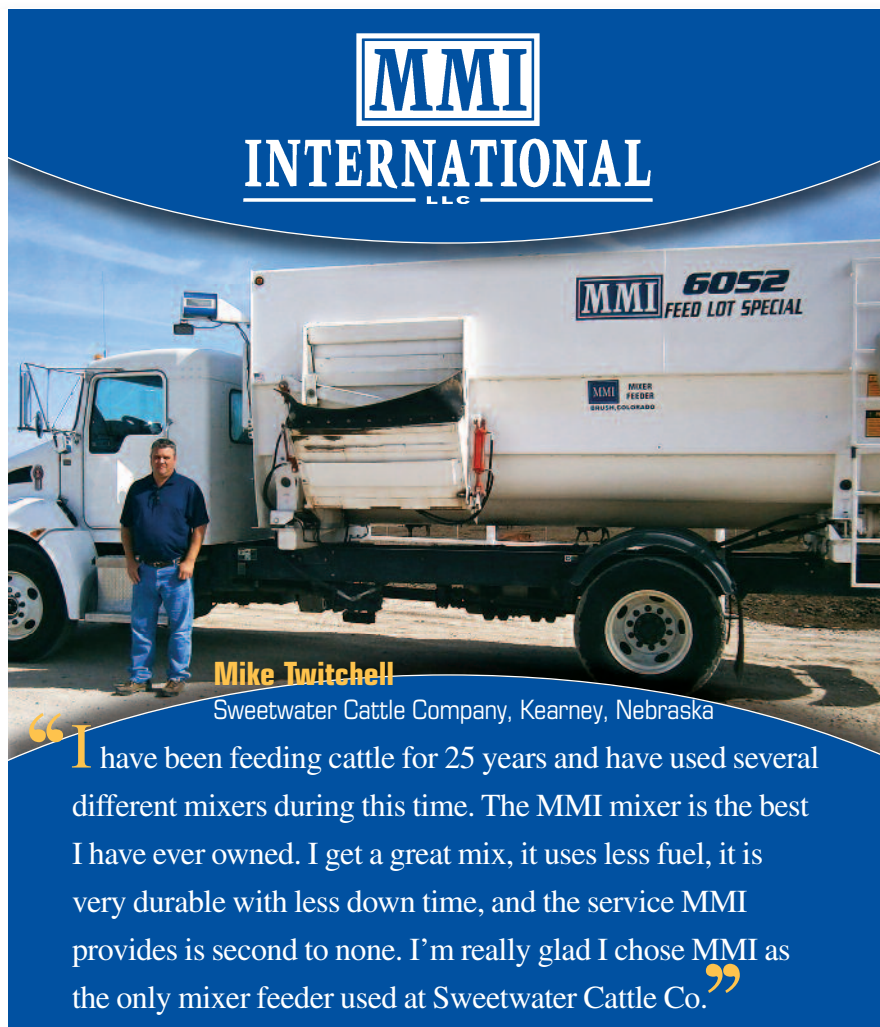
throughout the feeding program.

"Gain is worth so much today," says Glaubius. "Producers can often get more gain out of the same amount of feed especially in forage based diets where energy is limited. At today's prices if we just focus on efficiency we are leaving money on the table when producers could have both."

Belknap says his company is

seeing a nice growth rates with Midwestern cattle feeders using their products throughout the finishing phase.

"Research shows financial benefits feeding a probiotic," says Watson. "There are a lot of people using these products, but there's still some convincing to do. It all goes back to improved intakes, better gains, healthier animals." **FL**



The advertisement features a large white mixer truck with the MMI logo and "6052 FEED LOT SPECIAL" on its side. A man, Mike Twitchell, stands next to the truck. The background is a blue sky. The text "MMI INTERNATIONAL LLC" is prominently displayed at the top. Below the truck, there is a quote from Mike Twitchell.

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It won't be long now. Any day the winds will start howling, the snow will fly, the temperatures will drop to levels not fit for man nor beast – or machinery.

Feedyard managers in every climate need to prepare, even those who least expect to need it. "Up north, they're used to harsh winters, but people in warm climates don't always pay that close of attention to the weather," says Mark Cooksey, vice-president of operations for ROTO-MIX, in Dodge City, Kansas. "Then they get a cold snap and they have problems."

Dave McComb, dealer sales manager with Laird Manufacturing, says everyone needs to listen and watch weather reports and be ready. Laird is located in Merced, California, and sells equipment throughout the country. "Here in California, we may not need to plug vehicles in for two straight months, but we still need to be prepared."

For those more used to the change of seasons, much of preparing for winter seems to be common sense.

First and foremost on most people's minds is making sure those feed trucks are able to do their job.

Mark Holderness, at Dodge City International, says the pre-winter period is the time to make sure block

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BY TERRI QUECK-MATZIE

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heaters work, and radiators and air brakes have ample antifreeze. He also warns air dryers need to be checked and heater valves closed for summer need to be opened.

"Trucks that have a heater on the blow system need to be prepared, with filters replaced and the system cleaned," says Holderness. He says to not forget the simple things – like windshield washer fluid and mirror heaters.

Belts and hoses also need a thorough inspection for leaks and cracks – and age that will make them more likely to crack when temps drop below freezing.

Holderness says there is little need to be concerned with oil weight, though some do recommend lowering the viscosity. "Most trucks today run 15W40, and that's good for most climates."

It is important to make sure batteries are charged or replaced if necessary, and battery terminals are in good working condition with a solid charge connection. As the temperature drops, so does battery capacity, to around 46 percent available power at zero degrees.

Brakes and tires need checking, and weatherized. Transmissions and axles should have routine maintenance. "It's easier to do those things before it gets cold," says McComb, "than it is to tend to them in cold and snow."

The lower the temperature, the most likely it is problems with diesel fuel can occur. Snuffy Boyles, with BJM Sales & Service, of Hereford, Texas, says from the Midwest north, the feedlot manager needs to be sure diesel powered equipment is running fuel with an additive to keep fuel from gelling. "Your supplier should be putting it in," says Boyles, "but if not, you need to make sure you do."

Gelling occurs when natural wax in the fuel crystallizes due to

cold. The wax inhibits fuel flow and clogs filters. Additives reduce the risk of gelling, creating machinery starting problems. No. 1 diesel fuel is preferable for cold weather over No. 2 as it is more volatile and easier to ignite in the cold.

Where and how machinery is stored counts. "Bigger feedyards especially have shelter to get trucks and other equipment in at night,"

says McComb. In northern climates those shelters are often equipped with electrical outlets for plugging in engine block and other heaters.

It only takes a few degrees of warmth to give batteries more power and keep engine oil thin and flowing.

If parking outside, beware of the wind, adds McComb. "If you travel north in the winter, where it's 30 ►

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Get ready for WINTER... from previous page

degrees below zero, you'll notice people in the know don't park into the wind, where the engine takes the brunt of the cold wind."

And make no mistake about it, -30 degrees with an even lower wind chill is COLD. "If it's -30 and sunny, it's cold, but people who live and work in it are trained for it and know how to dress for it," says McComb. "But a -50 wind chill goes right through you."

And it takes its toll on machinery. The weather experts will say wind chill doesn't affect metal, but that's not always so. "Metal's just not as strong at 30 below," says Cooksey. "And oil gets thicker." An engine is about five times harder to start at zero degrees than 80 degrees.

"If you turn a truck off at 3 p.m. and don't start it up again until 12-15 hours later, it's going to get

cold," says McComb, "and it's going to be hard to start."

Holderness says make sure to start the truck and let it warm up in idle before shifting into gear.

Think twice before loading the feed truck the night before and letting it sit out in the cold. If not stored in a heated shed, it's like mixing ice cubes the next morning.

"Give that oil a chance to warm up and get the engine lubricated," adds McComb.

Likewise, the cold is also not friendly to feed mixers.

Boyles cautions against loading the truck the night before and letting it sit out in the cold. "A lot of guys want to load it up the night before so it's ready to go first thing in the morning. But if it's not stored in a heated shed, when you try to mix it first thing in the morning, it's like mixing ice cubes.

Maintenance on the mixer is also important, according to Cooksey. "Snow, cold, and moisture cause stress on the mixer. I encourage folks to check and service the mixer before winter."

Like all equipment around the feedyard, says Cooksey, "It's easier to service in the warm sunshine."

Other equipment

Preparing the feedyard for the winter chill involves more than keeping trucks in good working order, according to Matt Ulrich, sales manager for Dodge Manufacturing Brute Cattle Equipment.

"The most important thing is to clean things out nice and good," says Ulrich. Hydraulic chutes and scales can become clogged with frozen manure, making it impossible for moving parts to work. Frozen manure can also create slick spots that cause cattle to slip.

"Whether it's down under that chute or in the lot, once it's cold enough to freeze that manure, it's not likely anyone's going to try to clean it out," says Ulrich. "You'll want to do it while the weather still cooperates."

Loaders and other equipment need the same maintenance as trucks and large vehicles – oil, filters, belts and hoses. "If they're outside in the elements, you can bet they won't run well until things heat up," says Ulrich.

He adds it's important to make sure there is no water in hydraulic systems.

"Mostly just make sure things don't freeze down," says Ulrich, "and that everything that should move, does."

FL

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BRIEF SUMMARY (For full Prescribing Information, see package insert.)

INDICATIONS NUFLOR Injectable Solution is indicated for treatment of bovine respiratory disease (BRD), associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and *Histophilus somni* (*Haemophilus somnus*), and for the treatment of bovine interdigital phlegmon (foot rot, acute interdigital necrobacillosis, infectious pododermatitis) associated with *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Bacteroides melaninogenicus*. Also, it is indicated for the control of respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and *Histophilus somni* (*Haemophilus somnus*).

RESIDUE WARNINGS: Animals intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 28 days of the last intramuscular treatment. Animals intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 38 days of subcutaneous treatment. Do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older. Use of florfenicol in this class of cattle may cause milk residues. A withdrawal period has not been established in premarketing calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal.

WARNINGS: NOT FOR HUMAN USE. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. This product contains materials that can be irritating to skin and eyes. Avoid direct contact with skin, eyes, and clothing. In case of accidental eye exposure, flush with water for 15 minutes. In case of accidental skin exposure, wash with soap and water. Remove contaminated clothing. Consult a physician if irritation persists. Accidental injection of this product may cause local irritation. Consult a physician immediately. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) contains more detailed occupational safety information.

For customer service, adverse effects reporting, and/or a copy of the MSDS, call 1-800-211-3573.

CAUTION Not for use in cattle of breeding age. The effects of florfenicol on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Intramuscular injection may result in local tissue reaction which persists beyond 28 days. This may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter. Tissue reaction at injection sites other than the neck is likely to be more severe.

ADVERSE EFFECTS Inappetence, decreased water consumption, or diarrhea may occur transiently following treatment.

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24823148-JBS

The Feedlot Lagoon That Isn't

When Jaret Moyer moved his family to Eastern Kansas, he wanted to build a small grower/starter feedyard to support the stocker operation he and his wife were developing. Just two days after closing on the property that would become their home, Jaret attended the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) convention in Wichita, and by happenstance struck up a conversation with the man that would soon design the facility. As Jaret was new to the area, the last thing he wanted to do was make new neighbors upset over possible odor. Additionally, as this was a new venture, cost was very important. He had always heard that EPA requires all feed yards to have a lagoon to hold runoff, but he was also hearing about other alternatives for runoff control.

"EPA through the Clean Water

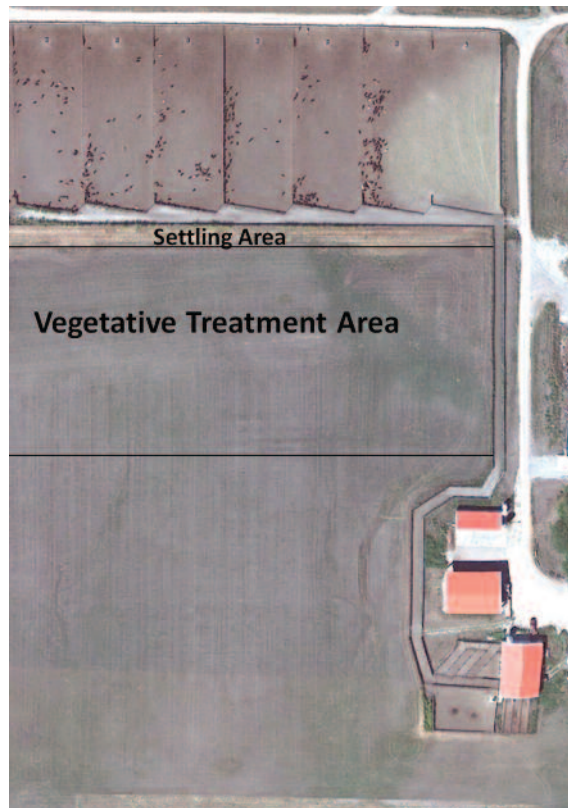
Act requires all feedlots to protect water quality to the same level as accomplished by typical lagoon systems. The requirements, however, are pollution control performance based, instead of requiring specifically utilizing detention lagoons," Jaret explained.

At that time, new EPA rules had just been issued in 2003 that clarified this topic somewhat and provided for "Voluntary Alternative Performance Standards." One alternative technology that had been researched and demonstrated significantly for several decades prior focused on grass filter areas for treating and

controlling runoff.

Because of that conversation in Wichita and the knowledge that they initiated a project using a grass filter strip in Iowa, Jaret reached out to Agricultural Engineering Associates (AEA) from Uniontown, Kansas for help with the design and permitting of his starter yard. AEA had over three decades of experience with vegetative treatment systems at the time, some on feedlots over 7,000 head of capacity. AEA recognized that Jaret's chosen site for his starter yard represented an ideal opportunity for utilizing vegetative treatment to control feedlot runoff.

The site for the starter yard Jaret selected is situated at the top of a gently and uniformly sloping field and there was room for a row of eight starter/growing pens. The runoff control design which AEA



proposed included a strip of land immediately below the drover's alley, graded to accept sheet flow out of the pens. Additionally, the grade would slow the flow even more to allow settling of manure solids carried in feedlot runoff, flowing from the pens. "We call it a settling bench, and the grass filter area below the settling bench is called a vegetative treatment area, or VTA" says Jaret. There initially was a lot of resistance to the design on the part of the regulators, but they eventually grew comfortable. The design was approved and the facility was built and put into operation in 2004.


With ten years of operational experience, Jaret and his wife, Shawna, love the way the VTA works, and the regulators have taken note of the advantages of not having a lagoon with its odor, maintenance, and pump out requirements. "The district environmental technician told me the best part of our system is that he only needs to stop by once each five years," volunteered Jaret, "and we probably get more odor from our silage pile than we get from the feedlot and the VTA." In ten years of operation, there have been no discharges and no complaints from EPA or neighbors.

There are, however, some maintenance requirements. On the advice of AEA at the outset, Jaret purchased a simple but very accurate laser level system to assist with

maintaining proper slopes for sheet flow from the lower portions of the pens, the drover's alley, when cleaning the settling bench and re-grading it for effective solids removal. At my recent visit, Jaret was preparing to clean and re-grade the settling bench for only the third time since constructing the pens and the VTA system.

Jaret is currently the President-




Elect of the Kansas Livestock Association. He and his wife Shawna enjoy sharing about their operation and their unique environmentally friendly alternative to feedlot lagoons. Jaret and Shawna are very pleased to accomplish protecting the environment and meeting regulatory requirements with the economical and management friendly option of their VTA. **FL**



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Ways to Extend Fall and Winter Grazing

There are many ways to save money on feeding costs if cows can graze longer into winter, according to Glenn Shewmaker, Extension Forage Specialist, University of Idaho. Annual crops are an option if they have at least 60 to 70 days of growing season to produce enough mass to more than offset the cost of planting.

"Oats probably produce the most and best quality of the cereal grains. A hay-type barley (awnless) will produce even more sometimes. This barley matures rapidly, so you must be careful to not let it get too mature before grazing. If you swath-graze, you capture nutrient quality at the right stage by cutting it at that time," he says.

Once it dries, it keeps fairly well

even if it gets wet later. A hard, dry frost will also help it dry. "Try to cut at least three or four days before wet weather," he says.

The advantage of cereals is that they are cool-season grasses. In a short season and early frost, cereals are safer for adequate production, compared to any of the warm-season grasses like sorghums or sudan grass, says Shewmaker.

"We've also used grazing corn. Its advantage over field corn is that grazing corn is mostly earless or has very small ears. The starch is distributed throughout the plant rather than concentrated in the ears," he explains.

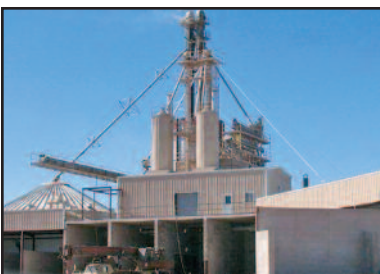
"With field corn, even when you strip graze, cows sort through and eat the ears, then have nothing but

stalks to clean up. When they overeat on ears the high starch content can lead to acidosis and founder," he says.

Forage sorghum, sudangrass, teff and some of the other hybrid warm-season grasses might produce some grain, but the ones planted for fall grazing usually wouldn't be that mature yet and starch would be distributed through the whole plant, Shewmaker says.

However, he cautions that some warm season grasses could be toxic right after a frost.

"Be careful grazing sorghum and sudangrass before its two feet tall, and don't graze during (or for several days after) a frost. Sorghums and their hybrids contain prussic acid, which is highest levels in young leaves and frosted tissues. Sudangrass is lower yielding than the sorghums or hybrids, but has lower prussic acid levels and less risk of cyanide poisoning. Cutting/drying will reduce prussic acid levels," he explains.



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Some of the brassicas make good forage. “Some canolas, improved grazing turnips, and regular turnips produce high quality feed and don’t need harvesting. It’s best to strip graze these crops to limit intake and force the animals to clean up each area.”

Some producers mix several types of plants for fall grazing. “A producer in southern Idaho tried different crops and liked the pearl millets because they were leafy, had excellent regrowth, and no prussic acid toxicity risk, and produced well in mid-summer compared to cool season forages. He also found that a variety of forages—in mixes or strips side-by-side—provide flexibility for grazing,” he says.

“On different years, different crops did better. Planting in mid to late summer you don’t know how long the growing season will be. It’s good insurance to have some cool-season cereals along with warm-season crops. He also liked some brassicas, red clover or peas in a mix with barley. He then used triticale for early spring grazing. The legume gave nitrogen fixation to aid soil fertility in crop rotations.”

In most situations, planting costs (to produce an annual crop) are cheaper than putting up hay, especially if it can be done with minimum or no-till. Costs for fuel and seed are low, compared to all the steps needed for hay production and feeding hay.

Many row-crop farmers could get more mileage out of crop aftermath if they used it for livestock forage. “Many are too eager to disk it under to add organic matter to the soil. But tilling actually oxidizes it faster and they lose some of that value. They would do better to leave it on the surface, letting animals graze, to recycle that carbon as manure. Almost all the nutrients then remain, as litter and manure,” says Shewmaker.

This reduces the mass; the next

crop can be planted easier. “This would be a more sustainable practice, and produce more feed or income. With the price of hay, ranchers would be glad to lease crop aftermath from a farmer, for grazing into winter. Cattle also clean up any weeds and reduce crop aftermath to a residue level that can be easily incorporated into the next spring planting methods.”

On some years, if a hay crop doesn’t mature enough to cut for hay, a person can windrow and use it for fall/winter grazing—letting the cows harvest it. “Even a farmer with no livestock could lease it for grazing or windrow grazing, obtaining some income from that crop. This also reduces residue—which can harbor voles and other undesirable invaders,” says Shewmaker. **FL**



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¹KEYSER ET AL., 2007, J. ANIM. SCI. 85: 1254-1273.



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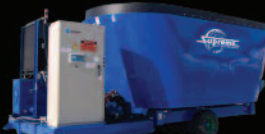
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GROWING

BY DONTYLER

In working with many family operations across the country, I am always impressed with how hard they work regardless of the markets, the weather or other challenges that are considered “normal” in agriculture. Whatever the situation, they do everything necessary to get the animals cared for, the crop planted or harvested, and the preparations made for the next day’s activities.

This work ethic is hard to find in any other occupation or lifestyle. It reaps great rewards for future generations...but it can have some unintended consequences that might need to be addressed.

Set a schedule everyone can abide by that allows a regular quit time for the day, a rotation for weekends off—and that no one feels guilty if the other guys are working.

Let’s use a hypothetical family operation with three brothers in their 40s who farm with their dad, who is semi-retired. All are married with families, all have their own area of the business to manage, and all gladly work 60 to 70 hours per week.

Here are some unintended consequences for our hypothetical operation:

Changing Priorities

When the families were young, the fathers were working hard to

PAINS OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS

get the operation established, pay off debt and grow as fast as possible. Everyone in each family was committed to this philosophy because reducing their financial risk was essential to their survival. Now, the debt is lower, there are some employees to help with the work load and there is a greater sense of security. The kids are getting older and the reality is setting in that, in no time at all, they will be off to college. Family time has been traded for long hours, and the wives are wondering when they can swap some of those hours so dad can spend some time with the kids. The brothers have worked so many years at this pace that they don't feel like they can take the time off without financial consequences.

They aren't very confident in their employees, partly because the brothers have always done the most important activities and were reluctant to fully trust—or train—their help.

Guilt

All the brothers have worked the same hours for many years and they feel that this intensity has been crucial to their success. They feel that all of them working these hours is the most "fair" way to do it, and they would feel guilty if one of them went home early while the others were still working. There is also a sense that they would betray their work ethic and set a bad example for the employees if they started to "take a lot of time off..." ➤

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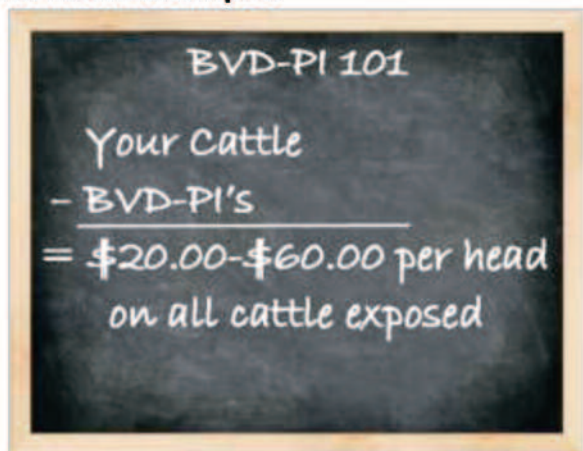
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Growing pains... from previous page

Inequity

Their wives feel that the employees have the best working arrangement in the operation. The guys don't want to lose an employee because they are hard to find and hard to train, so when an employee needs to leave early they let them take the time off. The employees also have a regular weekend schedule for the same reason. The guys feel that they are providing the time for the employees, but in reality the wives know that it is the family that is giving up this time that would otherwise be spent with their father and husband.

A better strategy for this family would include these actions:

- Set a schedule everyone can abide by that allows a regular quit time for the day, a rotation for weekends off—and that no one feels guilty if the other guys are working.
- Commit to progressively improving the quality of your staff so that they can take on more responsibility in your absence.
- Find ways to have fun at work again, and include family members in that atmosphere.
- Communicate openly about the demands of your work ethic, the changing priorities of your families and the interests of the spouses.

If you don't fix this, the next generation will think twice about wanting to do what you do for a living. They have a different definition of "Family Time" and it is a much higher priority than previous generations. **FL**

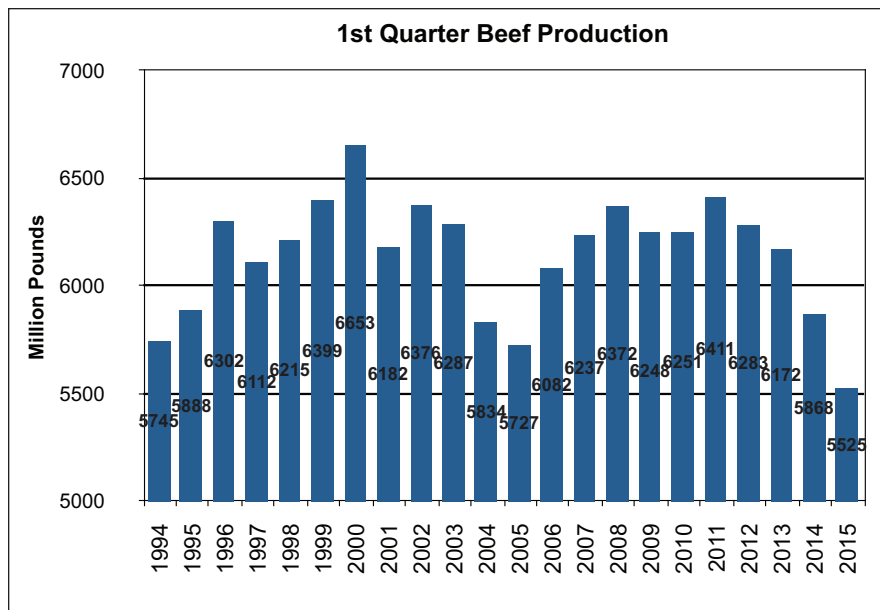
Don Tyler is the owner of Tyler & Associates, Clarks Hill, IN. For more information on these and other employee management topics, contact him at 765-523-3259 or don@dontyler.com

A New Normal?

BY LUKE SCHWIETERMAN

Cash cattle moved at \$170 the week of October 24, a new all-time record high. The next burning question is where prices go from here. What we know is that cattle supplies are tight in the fourth quarter and look to get tighter yet during the 1st quarter of next year.

This will mark the fourth year that 1st quarter production is less than the same quarter of the previous year. The chart is a graphic representation of as many years of drought. Complicating the supply of cattle is the expansion of the cow herd, which reduces the available cattle for slaughter even further.



Based on just this small amount of information, you could conclude that 1st quarter prices will be supported by the lack of supply. The argument that beef is pricing itself out of the marketplace is relative to many factors. Since beef supply is projected to be down 6%, demand has to decrease a like amount. That is basic economics. In other words, as supply decreases, price must increase so that demand is reduced and has price ever increased. Retail price is now at record levels as well.

You may notice that reductions in retail price are generally small compared to the increases. It seems logical, based on history, that even though retail price has reached record levels it is not likely that price will go back to the lower levels seen in 2012. The point is that higher beef prices are probably here to stay and should help support higher beef and cattle prices for the future. What seems to be created in this shortage of cattle is a "new normal" meaning the new range in cattle price could be 150 to 170(?). The likelihood of cattle going back to less than \$100 seems remote.

We continue to be bullish this market until the 1st quarter ►





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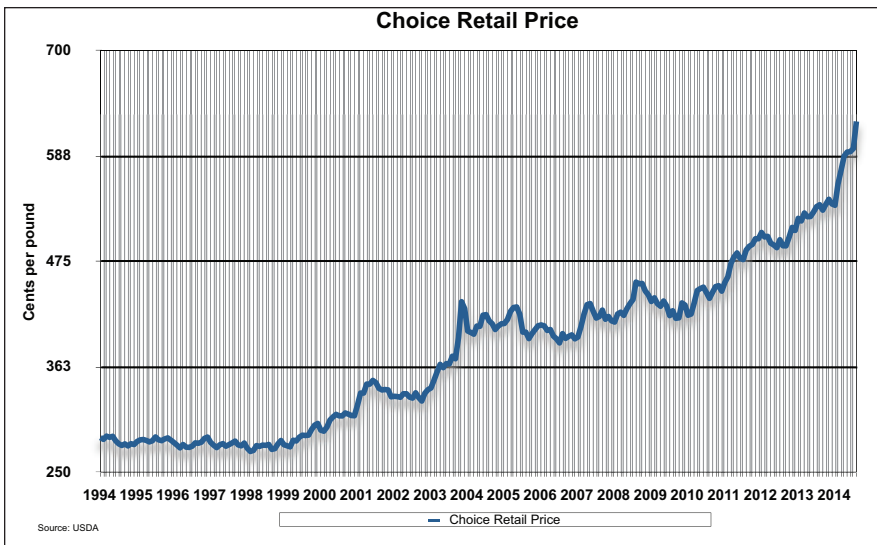
A New Normal.. from previous page
passes then cattle supplies should increase. Until then the recommendation is to use put options for

price insurance. The marketplace seems nervous about the Middle East, Ebola, and the Stock Market. In these volatile times, we feel it

is prudent to hedge all cattle on feed because outside news can have a direct effect on the perception of beef demand. We would also suggest buying call options on feeder cattle that you intend to buy over the next six months as a hedge against rising feeder cattle prices. On feeder cattle that you own, we suggest put options as price insurance.

Feed costs are a wild card going forward. We've just seen a rally in all the grains when supplies are purportedly in excess. It could be that \$3.20 corn was cheap enough to inspire demand even though \$2.80 corn is what we've been told to expect. To keep farmers from planting more acres of beans next year and reduce corn acres, the market needs to increase the value of corn. Next year's crop outlook will probably drive current price more than it has in previous years. If the weather becomes marginal and farmers shift acres to beans because of cheaper input costs, the price of corn will likely go up. We would suggest buying call options on corn on pull backs. **FL**

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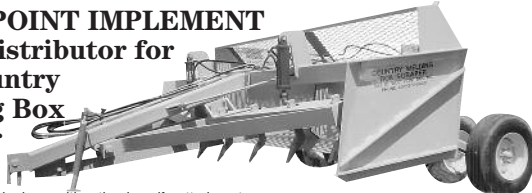


Photo is shown with optional scarifier attachment

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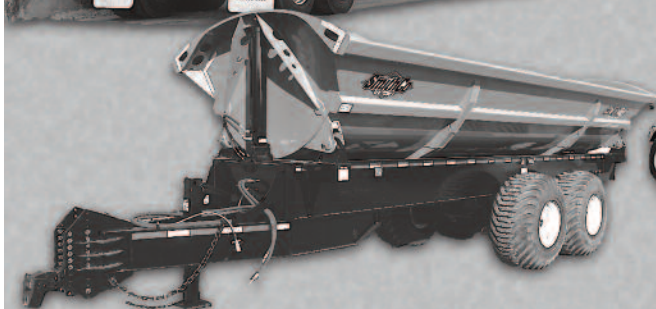
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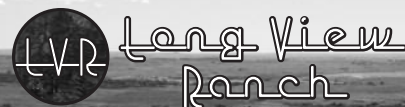
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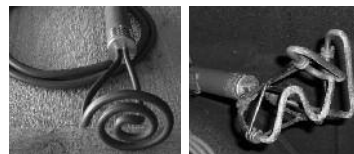
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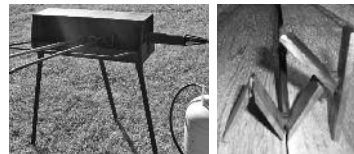


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