

FEEDLOT[®]



FEEDER INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS

Volume XXIII Number 1

February 2015

Marketing

- Beef's role on the world stage
- A turbulent 2014
- Hedging for the roller coaster ride

Feedlot Focus

- Independent feedlot audits

Stocker Special

- Lameness identification and treatment

Cow Calf Corner

- Pre-calving vaccinations for cows
- Minerals matter



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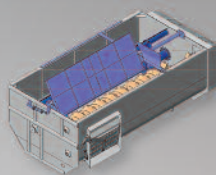
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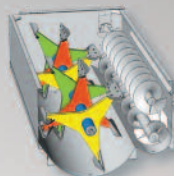
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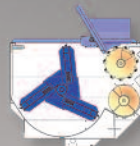
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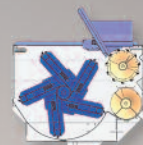


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The battle of nutrition guidelines

It appears we – as a meat industry – have a battle ahead. This year, the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will release the new dietary guidelines for Americans. And early indications are the new guidelines are not meat friendly.

In December, a government advisory committee made up of medical and nutrition experts released their preliminary recommendations. In addition to less sugar and less caffeine, the panel suggested Americans reduce their consumption of lean meats. Instead, they say, Americans should focus on a plant-rich diet. In fact, their statement said a plant-rich and meat-avoiding diet is “more health promoting and is associated with lesser environmental impact than is the current average U.S. diet.”

The advisory panel has been

discussing the idea of sustainability in public meetings, indicating that its recommendations may address the environment.

An article in the *Boston Globe* stated the advisory committee has discussed the idea, and doctors and academics on the panel have discussed sustainability in terms of conserving food resources and also what are the healthiest foods.

There is “compatibility and overlap” between what’s good for health and good for the environment, the panel said.

The NCBA released a statement from physician and cattleman Dr. Richard Thorpe on the preliminary report. “Despite a large body of strong and consistent evidence supporting lean beef’s role in healthy diets, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee appears to be out of touch with today’s lean

meat supply in the retail counter and the 30+ years of nutrition advice showcasing benefits of lean beef,” Thorpe said. “I am deeply disappointed that the Committee missed this opportunity to positively influence the American diet by blatantly disregarding sound science and removing lean beef from a healthful dietary pattern.”

According to Thorpe, the Committee presented and agreed to evidence showing that there are healthy dietary patterns with red meat intake above current U.S. consumption levels. However, they appear to be turning a blind eye to their own evidence.

“To recommend that Americans eat less of a heart healthy protein, the only area of the existing guidelines currently consumed within the recommended amounts, demonstrates that this Committee has its own agenda, and it is not guided by the evidence. This flawed process and Committee bias is preventing a fair and reasonable discussion of the true science,” Thorpe said.

This preliminary recommendation comes forth just as the nutrition science community is discussing the benefits of fat in diets. Research into American diets in the last 30 years show a direct correlation between cutting fats and an increase in diabetes and heart disease. Some research indicates that an increase in carbohydrates (in lieu of fats) may be to blame.

Whether individuals listen or not, the dietary guidelines affect nutritional patterns throughout the country — from federally subsidized school lunches to labels on food packages to your doctor’s advice. They also form the basis for the government’s “My Plate” icon, which replaced the food pyramid a few years ago.

It appears the meat industry will have an uphill battle on their hands.



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BY TERRI QUECK-MATZIE

BEEF'S ROLE ON THE WORLD-WIDE STAGE



Global demand for beef is rising, while global supplies have stayed stagnant for nearly seven years. Producers are working to change that, but even their best efforts will take three to five years to take effect. With an 80-million person per year worldwide population increase, "It's simple economics," says Global AgriTrends CEO Brett Stuart. "Any increase in production will pay."

But even "simple economics" aren't simple in the hands of an analyst like Stuart. What is obvious is also complex. At the Iowa Cattle Industry Convention held in Des Moines last December, Stuart outlined the global forces that are, and will continue to, affect cattle markets here at home.

"There's a lot going on," says Stuart. "We are truly in uncharted water." Global AgriTrends, in cooperation with CattleFax, monitors global protein markets and their relevance to the local scene. "And without a doubt, the key driver is the beef market."

High beef prices are a global phenomenon, not just a U.S. scenario, but Stuart says eventually supply will catch up to demand; the question is when, and what the effect will be.

The World According to China

China is the world's leading importer of beef, and consumers have developed a preference for grain-fed product, a key market influence.

China remains closed to the U.S. because of the BSE ban, but it has recently opened to Brazil and Ireland, and Stuart predicts the U.S. won't be far behind. Beef is the next, new, hot thing in China, and while it can be difficult for governments to navigate those waters, he says multi-national companies are having more success. As China faces food safety issues with domestic products, imported foods are becoming more desirable to those who can afford them.

China, like many other developing countries has a growing middle class (the world's 300-million-person middle class is expected to double in the next eight years) that demands more, and higher quality, protein.

"Population and income drive increased meat consumption. And these are countries that don't have the resources to produce more food," says Stuart. In addition, existing resources may not be wisely used. The Chinese government just cut off funding for GMO research.

Half of the pigs in the world live



In China, beef is most often served as frozen rolls of thinly sliced beef that are then boiled tableside in oil, water, or hot chili paste.

in China, and the country has begun liquidating sows. Historically, they supplement these gaps with U.S. pork.

Stuart says the move is all about corn. China is now the Number 2 corn producer in the world, growing 8 billion bushels per year at a price of around \$9.50 per bushel (with 95 percent still harvested by hand). But even though corn is stockpiled, the government is concentrating efforts on maintaining a high price to encourage planting next year. "That's their biggest fear," says Stuart, "that farmers won't plant corn next year. Because there isn't enough corn traded in the world to make up the difference if they don't."

Further accentuating the diversity and complexity of today's global market, India has become the Number 2 exporter of beef in the world, behind Number 1 Brazil. While Brahman cattle are worshiped in the Hindu religion and freely roam streets untouched, water buffalo are not. Muslims in northern India have turned this resource into a significant market force.

India's production growth is forecast to outpace everyone else's. It currently supplies 37 percent of beef imported by the Greater China region – China, Hong Kong, and Vietnam – to the tune of about \$4 billion a year. That

dollar amount is hard for even political foes of Indian beef production to overcome.

Stuart says there are also “imbalances” in global protein supply and demand. U.S., Canada, and Mexico beef; Chinese beef;

Russian beef, pork, and poultry; and U.S. pork all saw record high prices in 2014, indicating a shortage of supply. Meanwhile Russian bans on European Union and Canadian pork (backlash from Russia

over Ukrainian sanctions); expanded beef production in Brazil; and the increase in Indian water buffalo production created surpluses in those parts of the world.

“The rubber band is very tight between supply and demand.” ▶

Global Demographics

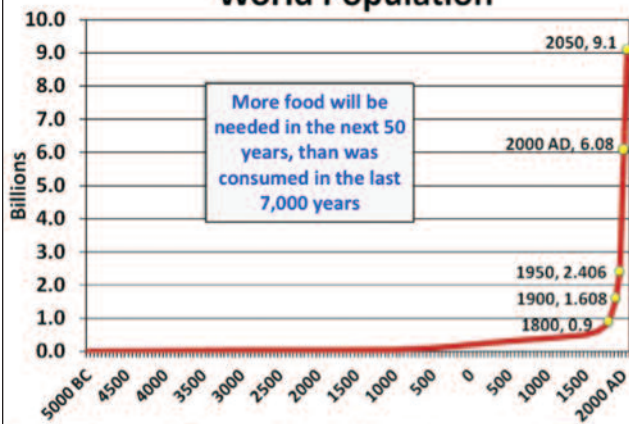
- The global middle class is beginning a major wave of growth; **2 billion (2012) to 4.9 billion (2030)**
— David Rohde, Reuters
- Asia’s middle class spent **\$4.8 billion** in 2010; by 2030 they will spend **\$32.6 billion (+580%)**
— OECD, Kiplinger



Global AgriTrends

Population and income drive increased meat consumption. “We’re just seeing the tip of the iceberg here in terms of middle class buying power,” says Stuart. “And these are countries that don’t have the resources to produce their own food.”

World Population



Source: US Department of Commerce, plus other published estimates

Global AgriTrends

More food will be needed in the next 50 years than has been consumed in the last 7,000,” says Stuart. “It just doesn’t make sense to legislate away technology. It’s socially irresponsible.”

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Beef's Role... from previous page

What Goes Up Must Come Down

The worldwide increase in population and income paints a rosy picture if your sitting on the supply, but Stuart warns against being too bullish. "Markets are like airplanes, sooner or later they all come down." He adds this one will be up there for a while. "It's not coming down anytime soon, but it's still an airplane."

United Nations predictions for poultry alone show a 150 percent increase (of total U.S. poultry production; if all growth had to come from the U.S.) in consumption demand in the next nine years. Beef estimates are for an additional 9 million tons. "Keep in mind we've had virtually no increase in U.S. beef production in the last seven years," says Stuart. "That's pretty positive."

Global prices in October were up 25 percent from one year ago. "We've all seen what the U.S. prices are doing, but this is the global

market," reminds Stuart.

He says those kinds of profits present a huge opportunity. "First of all, don't forget how to make money on \$1.50 calves, because you may have to do it again some day." He stresses the importance of figuring out how to make your operation more efficient, more productive, and produce a better quality product. "You have a chance to upgrade and get more competitive at what you do."



More people now live inside this circle than outside, creating food demand throughout most of Asia.

We Are Not Alone

The Brazilian beef industry is increasing its focus on genetics. Brazil currently produces more cattle than the U.S., but the U.S. produces more beef because of higher carcass weights and yields. They started retaining heifers about five years ago. Exports are predicted to be up 10 percent next year, with the top markets Russia, Hong Kong, Venezuela, Egypt and Iran. Brazil's economy is also growing, increasing domestic demand.

The U.S. faces its most direct competition from Australia, primarily for Pacific Rim markets. Australia is also the prime source for U.S. imports of beef, up 25 percent year to date. That beef will likely not be available next year, tightening U.S. supply. The combination of drought and Chinese demand are severely limiting Australian supply, and the effects will be long-term. "They're doing exactly what we did in Texas two years ago," says Stuart. "They're killing cattle because they have to and because the demand is there. And as we know all too well, that shrinks the cow herd."

He says much of the world looks at high prices differently than U.S. producers. "When you're cash poor, the prospect of selling to make cash is attractive. So when prices are high, you take all the cash you can get. But in the U.S. we see high prices as an incentive to expand, to make even more down the road."

Stuart says predictors he has compiled show it is possible to reach future food needs targets, but it will take smart use of resources and a commitment to the people of the world. "We have to make people understand that it is socially irresponsible to legislate away efficiencies and technology. We will starve people if we do that. We will need all our options."

He says all the global market complexity still boils down to simple economics: "The message from the market is: make more beef." **FL**

A Hot Item for Feedyards This Year

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This year the price of grain and hay have shown the benefits of fat and molasses in feedlot rations. But a critical factor in their use is the storage for fat or molasses. Palmer has been building a heated, sloped bottom, all welded steel tank for fat and molasses storage for over 25 years. The heaters, gas or electric, are in a heating chamber below the storage area. This prevents the products from scorching. The top of the heat chamber is the bottom of the storage tank, it is sloped so all fine solids flow with gravity out the bottom with the liquid ingredients.



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Brief Summary of Full
Prescribing Information



Antibiotic
100 mg of tulathromycin/mL

For subcutaneous injection in beef and non-lactating dairy cattle and intramuscular injection in swine only. Not for use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older or in calves to be processed for veal.

CAUTION
Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

INDICATIONS

Beef and Non-lactating Dairy Cattle

BRD – DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni*, and *Mycoplasma bovis*; and for the control of respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni*, and *Mycoplasma bovis*.

IBK – DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK) associated with *Moraxella bovis*.

Foot Rot – DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of bovine foot rot (interdigital necrobacillosis) associated with *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Porphyromonas levis*.

Swine

DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is indicated for the treatment of swine respiratory disease (SRD) associated with *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, *Haemophilus parasuis*, and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*; and for the control of SRD associated with *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae* in groups of pigs where SRD has been diagnosed.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Cattle

Inject subcutaneously as a single dose in the neck at a dosage of 2.5 mg/kg (1.1 mL/100 lb) body weight (BW). Do not inject more than 10 mL per injection site.

Swine

Inject intramuscularly as a single dose in the neck at a dosage of 2.5 mg/kg (0.25 mL/22 lb) BW. Do not inject more than 2.5 mL per injection site.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

The use of DRAXXIN Injectable Solution is contraindicated in animals previously found to be hypersensitive to the drug.

WARNINGS

FOR USE IN ANIMALS ONLY.

NOT FOR HUMAN USE.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

NOT FOR USE IN CHICKENS OR TURKEYS.

RESIDUE WARNINGS

Cattle

Cattle intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 18 days from the last treatment. Do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminate calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal.

Swine

Swine intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 5 days from the last treatment.

PRECAUTIONS

Cattle

The effects of DRAXXIN on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Subcutaneous injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

Swine

The effects of DRAXXIN on porcine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Intramuscular injection can cause a transient local tissue reaction that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Cattle

In one BRD field study, two calves treated with DRAXXIN at 2.5 mg/kg BW exhibited transient hypersalivation. One of these calves also exhibited transient dyspnea, which may have been related to pneumonia.

Swine

In one field study, one out of 40 pigs treated with DRAXXIN at 2.5 mg/kg BW exhibited mild salivation that resolved in less than four hours.

STORAGE CONDITIONS


Store at or below 25°C (77°F).

HOW SUPPLIED

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A growing number of beef consumers are looking for something more than just flavor and value, they want to know that the beef they are feeding their children is safe, wholesome and humanely raised. In order to meet consumer demands Rob Eirich, University of Nebraska Extension Educator and Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Director believes processors, feedlots and producers should be prepared to see independent, third-party audits that are currently optional become more important and possibly mandatory in the future.

“An audit is the official examination that verifies something,” said Eirich at the Beef Feedlot Roundtable Meeting in Bridgeport, Neb. “We shouldn’t feel threatened by that. If we are doing everything we are supposed to, the audit just verifies that we are producing the product we say we are.”

“We want the auditors to verify we are using the best care and management of the animals we produce. Consumers continue to want more information about how their food is produced. They want to know how and where their beef is raised. They want to know it is wholesome and safe, and that they are getting a quality beef product,” he said.

Who are these consumers? McDonalds recently announced that by 2016, all of the beef they serve will come from sustainable

INDEPENDENCE

BY JENNIFER GARREAU

producers. Tyson Foods has also required all of their suppliers to have third-party audits. WalMart, JBS and Cargill are considering implementing similar policies.

Audits evaluate if processors are obtaining their beef from a verifiable, reliable source and if feedlots and producers are using the 2009 revised BQA best management practices adapted from The Cattle Industry’s Guidelines for the Care and Handling of Cattle.

Feedlots can schedule audits in advance and usually have two weeks prior notice and are given a list of required documentation. The guidelines state that audits should only be scheduled under normal operating conditions and not during extreme weather or during disease outbreaks.

“When they come, they will want a daily schedule to see first-hand how the cattle are handled. They will want to watch how the cattle are loaded and unloaded and how they are processed. They will count how many fall and how many times the hot shot is used,” said Eirich.

The audit focuses on three main areas – animals, records and documentation of standard operating procedures and facilities and equipment. Auditors will look for animal abuse and neglect, withdrawal and residue avoidance, written protocols and documentation, facility maintenance, feed and water access and cleanliness, chutes and chute operation, stocking rate and

NT, THIRD-PARTY FEEDLOT AUDITS

the Wave of the Future?

space and for the amount of dry area available in pens.


An auditor will watch staff process one hundred head of cattle looking for excessive use of electric prods, cattle stumbling, tripping, jumping or falling out of the chute, cattle vocalization in the chute and how many cattle are mis-caught in the chute.

Eirich said one of the most important things feedlots can do to prepare for an audit is to have standard operating procedures written down and on hand. Written protocols and documentation are required for employee training, pen maintenance, care of downers, euthanasia procedures, disease

prevention, biosecurity standards, animal disposal, procedures for receiving, storing and handling of medications, broken needle procedures, verification of a veterinarian-client relationship, feed delivery records, feed quality standards, medicated feed and supplement procedures, an emergency action plan, and shipping, receiving and processing procedures.

A feedyard cannot fail the audit. Scoring occurs in three categories – “acceptable” meaning that an operation meets guidelines, “needs improvement” meaning that action is required to correct problems and “unacceptable” meaning that immediate corrections must be made.

“It is a goal of the audits to help define the best management practices and educate suppliers in producing a high quality beef product for consumers. Eventually, unannounced audits will occur so they know producers are following the standard operating procedures on a daily basis,” said Eirich. “For producers this is part of product integrity which shows their commitment to produce a wholesome, safe and a quality beef product each and every time for consumers.”

The BQA Assessment Guides for feedlots, stockers and cow-calf operations can be found on the BQA website at www.bqa.org. 

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Caution: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

READ ENTIRE BROCHURE CAREFULLY BEFORE USING THIS PRODUCT.

INDICATIONS

ZACTRAN is indicated for the treatment of bovine respiratory disease (BRD) associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida*, *Histophilus somni* and *Mycoplasma bovis* in beef and non-lactating dairy cattle. ZACTRAN is also indicated for the control of respiratory disease in beef and non-lactating dairy cattle at high risk of developing BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica* and *Pasteurella multocida*.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

As with all drugs, the use of ZACTRAN is contraindicated in animals previously found to be hypersensitive to this drug.

WARNING: FOR USE IN CATTLE ONLY. NOT FOR USE IN HUMANS. KEEP THIS AND ALL DRUGS OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. NOT FOR USE IN CHICKENS OR TURKEYS.

The material safety data sheet (MSDS) contains more detailed occupational safety information. To report adverse effects, obtain an MSDS or for assistance, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251.

RESIDUE WARNINGS: Do not treat cattle within 35 days of slaughter. Because a discard time in milk has not been established, do not use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal.

PRECAUTIONS

The effects of ZACTRAN on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Subcutaneous injection of ZACTRAN may cause a transient local tissue reaction in some cattle that may result in trim loss of edible tissues at slaughter.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Transient animal discomfort and mild to moderate injection site swelling may be seen in cattle treated with ZACTRAN.

EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of ZACTRAN for the treatment of BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida* and *Histophilus somni* was demonstrated in a field study conducted at four geographic locations in the United States. A total of 497 cattle exhibiting clinical signs of BRD were enrolled in the study. Cattle were administered ZACTRAN (6 mg/kg BW) or an equivalent volume of sterile saline as a subcutaneous injection once on Day 0. Cattle were observed daily for clinical signs of BRD and were evaluated for clinical success on Day 10. The percentage of successes in cattle treated with ZACTRAN (58%) was statistically significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) than the percentage of successes in the cattle treated with saline (19%). The effectiveness of ZACTRAN for the treatment of BRD associated with *M. bovis* was demonstrated independently at two U.S. study sites. A total of 502 cattle exhibiting clinical signs of BRD were enrolled in the studies. Cattle were administered ZACTRAN (6 mg/kg BW) or an equivalent volume of sterile saline as a subcutaneous injection once on Day 0. At each site, the percentage of successes in cattle treated with ZACTRAN on Day 10 was statistically significantly higher than the percentage of successes in the cattle treated with saline (74.4% vs. 24% [$p < 0.001$], and 67.4% vs. 46.2% [$p = 0.002$]). In addition, in the group of calves treated with gamithromycin that were confirmed positive for *M. bovis* (pre-treatment nasopharyngeal swabs), there were more calves at each site (45 of 57 calves, and 5 of 6 calves) classified as successes than as failures.

The effectiveness of ZACTRAN for the control of respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing BRD associated with *Mannheimia haemolytica* and *Pasteurella multocida* was demonstrated in two independent studies conducted in the United States. A total of 467 crossbred beef cattle at high risk of developing BRD were enrolled in the study. ZACTRAN (6 mg/kg BW) or an equivalent volume of sterile saline was administered as a single subcutaneous injection within one day after arrival. Cattle were observed daily for clinical signs of BRD and were evaluated for clinical success on Day 10 post-treatment. In each of the two studies, the percentage of successes in the cattle treated with ZACTRAN (86% and 78%) was statistically significantly higher ($p = 0.0019$ and $p = 0.0016$) than the percentage of successes in the cattle treated with saline (36% and 58%).

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LAMENESS

Identification and treatment important for public perception

As cattle navigate across pastures or fields, frozen ground or muddy conditions due to winter precipitation can set in motion the opportunity for injury or infections in the foot. Identifying affected cattle, as well as determining the cause and best course of action are essential not only for animal welfare, but also to keep cattle performance on track.

In the cattlemen's eye, treatment for lameness is important so the calf will continue to travel across the pasture pain free, grazing comfortably throughout the day. A lame calf will spend excess energy traveling, and will likely not continue to eat at the same level as its non-lame counterparts. This means reduced intake and reduced weight gain, especially for stocker cattle on wheat pasture or grass. For a cow, reduced intake means reduced milk production and reproductive efficiency.

However, in today's environment, the public's perception of a lame calf is also important to consider. People enjoy seeing animals grazing in roadside pastures, and the perception of an animal's discomfort is troubling to the general public. According to an article from the South Dakota State University Extension Service, the public's experiences with lameness and subsequent pain is most likely through an association with human ailments including tissue bruising, skin cuts, and bone fractures, so they empathize with the animal from that point of view.

With more and more of American consumers interested in the well-being of livestock, their perception of an animal in pain as well as the economic impact of lameness

are two important reasons to quickly deal with the issue. Lameness can be difficult to identify, and experienced and careful observation is important. One of the first observable clinical changes in a lame animal occurs when the animal's stride is shortened. Zinpro developed a Locomotion Scoring System that is helpful in training individuals to identify lameness. (www.zinpro.com/lameness/beef/locomotion-scoring)

Lameness can be caused by several factors, including travel across frozen ground, stepping on objects in the pasture and infection. According to Russ Daly, DVM, Associate Professor, SDSU Extension Veterinarian, State Public Health Veterinarian, footrot is the most common infectious cause of lameness in feedlot and pasture cattle. Footrot is commonly caused by the bacteria *Fusobacterium necrophorum*, but other bacteria can cause the ailment as well. When the protective barrier of the skin is breached by these bacteria due to environmental conditions or by abrasions or injury, the bacteria causes a painful, necrotic infection.

Lameness can also be caused by hairy heel warts (digital dermatitis), joint infection, toe abscesses, toe ulcers and laminitis, among other issues. Determining the true cause of lameness is important for treatment decisions.

Regardless of the cause, identification and treatment is important for not only animal performance but also for the public's perception of the treatment of livestock.

In the next issue of Feed-Lot, an article will analyze the different types of infections, prevention and treatment options.

FL

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¹ Sifferman RL, Wolff WA, Holste JE, et al. Field efficacy evaluation of gamithromycin for treatment of bovine respiratory disease in cattle at feedlots. *Intern J Appl Res Vet Med*. 2011;9(2):171-180.

² Lechtenberg K, Daniels CS, Royer GC, et al. Field efficacy study of gamithromycin for the control of bovine respiratory disease in cattle at high risk of developing the disease. *Intern J Appl Res Vet Med*. 2011;9(2):189-197.

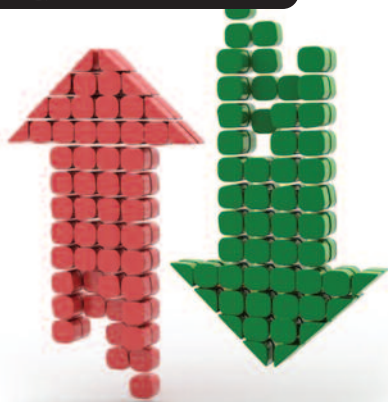
³ ZACTRAN product label.

⁴ Kahn, CM. *Merck Veterinary Manual*. 10th edition. 2010:1319.

⁵ Van Donkersgoed J, Merrill JK. A comparison of tilmicosin to gamithromycin for on-arrival treatment of bovine respiratory disease in feeder steers. *Bovine Practitioner*. 2012;46(1):46-51.



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A Turbulent 2014

As cattlemen get familiar with the 2015 calendar hanging on the kitchen or office wall, we take this opportunity to look back with some amazement. Undoubtedly,

2014 will go down as a landmark year for the beef business under conditions that many have dubbed "the perfect storm" in terms of the impact on cattle prices.

Producers in all segments largely enjoyed a multiplier effect on profit margins, as year-after-year contraction in cow-calf numbers came home to roost for the U.S. beef industry last year. Drought conditions stemming back to 2010 in Texas and the Southwest coupled with the widespread drought of 2012 pushed beef cow numbers from 31 million in 2010 to 29 million in 2014. The net result was the fewest beef cows in U.S. inventory since 1960.

The resulting supply deficit of fed cattle and calves began to permeate the industry in the fourth quarter of 2013 as we saw live fed cattle prices break past \$130/cwt. in October, where they remained through mid-January of 2014. Values quickly marched onward to \$145 in late February, heating up to range from \$149/cwt. to \$157/cwt. through mid-July. This came in the wake of a 6% reduction in federally inspected cattle harvested. Steer and heifer counts were down more than 4% to the tune of 20,000 head weekly, but cull dairy and beef cows were also fewer by 10% and 13%, respectively. Cull beef cows would continue to decline to 17% fewer by year's end.

The value of 90% lean ground beef jumped 20% from an April-June level of \$2.50/lb. to \$3/lb. for the duration of the year. The cull cow shortage was enjoyed by producers who saw auction prices for high-yielding cows come within \$10/cwt. of the younger fed cattle at times.

On the other end of the pricing spectrum, boneless, Choice ►



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



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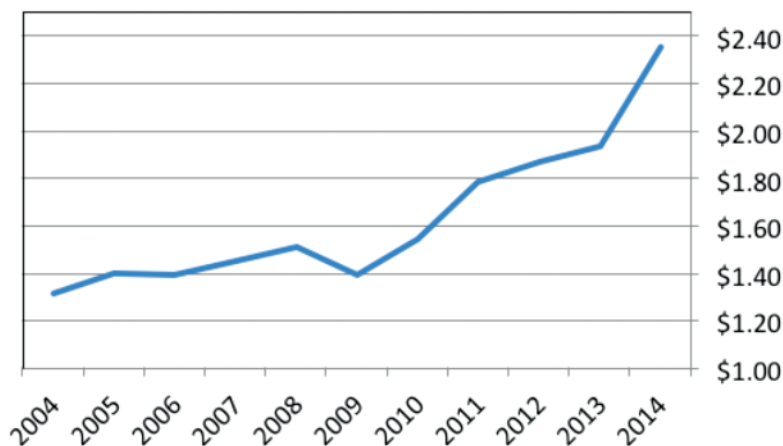
A Turbulent 2014... from previous page

ribeye rolls followed seasonal price fluctuations throughout 2014, beginning January at \$6/lb. but escalating to a peak of \$8.28/lb. in late June, a 15% increase above the 2013 price at that time. After a seasonal late summer drop off, pre-Christmas buying demand pushed ribs to \$8.54/lb. in late November, an extreme number, but only 7% above the 2013 value. All told, the comprehensive boxed beef increase in 2014 amounted to 18.2%, according to USDA figures, easily surpassing the 2011 gains of 13.4%.

The storyline that was hard to miss in the 4th quarter of 2014 was that of record-heavy fed cattle carcass weights. Lack of finished fed cattle numbers created a lightning-round of buying in the late fall weeks as feedlots held packers' feet to the fire on the few cattle not obligated through contractual agreements. All the while, corn prices made for friendly cost-of-gain calculations and record feedlot profits on a "cash to cash" basis.

With weekly harvest counts drastically low, packers

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could do nothing to force feedlots to keep a lid on carcass weights. Just the opposite, they removed penalties for heavy carcasses, in many cases, in order to add tonnage to their production on fewer head.

After remaining even with a year ago through mid-July, carcass weights began a steady climb, beyond the seasonal expectation. They topped the second week in November at a scale-smashing 906 lb. average on the steers, 28 lb. heavier than the same week in 2013. Fed heifers were slower to join the race in late August, but followed suit by hitting their limit a week later than the steers at an 830 lb. average, 26 lb. heavier than the year before. November fed cattle harvest head counts, depressed by some 30,000 head per week, were supplanted by heavier carcass weights equivalent to 10,000 or even 14,000 head per week.

The Certified Angus Beef® brand had monitored the impact on cut size and uniformity for more than a year before deciding in November to increase its maximum carcass weight specification from 999 lb. to 1,050 lb. Other brands quickly followed suit.

In years where carcass-weight averages increase, we tend to see Choice and Prime grading levels positively affected. At first glance, it appears that there is a causative relationship in 2014, as both weights and marbling levels increased. The aggregate Choice grading percentage for the year ended with a 2.4 percentage point increase, rounding out at 65.4%. As well, Prime carcasses as a share of the total were up half of one percentage point at a 4.19% average for the year. Both numbers are the highest in the USDA data set going back to 1997.

Bear in mind that Zilmax® was removed from the market in September 2013. Therefore a straight comparison of 2013 and 2014 quality grade patterns cannot easily be drawn. There are several additional factors that could have impacted the differences in quality grades. Increased carcass weights could have lifted

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those grades. Furthermore, the proportion of feeder cattle placed on feed weighing more than 800 lb. was higher in 2014 and the percentage of Holstein steers in the mix grew to as much as 20% with beef numbers suppressed. Each of these factors is influential and positive with regard to marbling levels and quality grade.

The USDA reports quality grade in a regional format for 10 vast regions, but then separates the “big three” packing states of Nebraska, Kansas and Texas in weekly data. U.S. quality grade has shown dramatic advances since 2006, but Texas packers have come the farthest, adding 15 percentage points to their Choice grading share in those eight years. Much of that gain occurred in 2014 as fed cattle

In years where carcass-weight averages increase, we tend to see Choice and Prime grading levels positively affected.

harvested in Texas jumped 5 points to average 57% Choice. As we look to the north where quality grades are always better, Kansas packers improved 2.5 points, averaging 64.5% Choice while Nebraska saw the least one-year improvement, up 1 point, but the highest quality at 69.5% Choice in 2014. Always slight in numbers but powerful in value, the Prime carcasses followed the same trend averaging 1.4% in Texas, 2.9% in Kansas and 4.8% of the Nebraska fed cattle weekly harvest.

Short of predicting an end to the drought in California and the Southwest, there is good news as we look to rebuild the cowherd. Heifer retention appears to be underway if the steer/heifer ratio in

the weekly harvest is reliable guidance. That trend shifted notably in 2014, moving the heifer portion lower by 1 point to 35.4% of the fed cattle mix, the lowest since we began tracking the figure in 2009 but not as low as historical herd-building years where the figure was in the lower 30-percentile range. Even so, 2.4% fewer heifers were marked for retention in the

July 2014 USDA cattle inventory report as compared to the July 2012 report. Governmental budget problems didn't allow for a mid-year report in 2013. With the fall calf market at an all-time high, producers were challenged with a decision on just how many heifers to keep, weighing the opportunity to restock the herd versus immediate profits. **FL**



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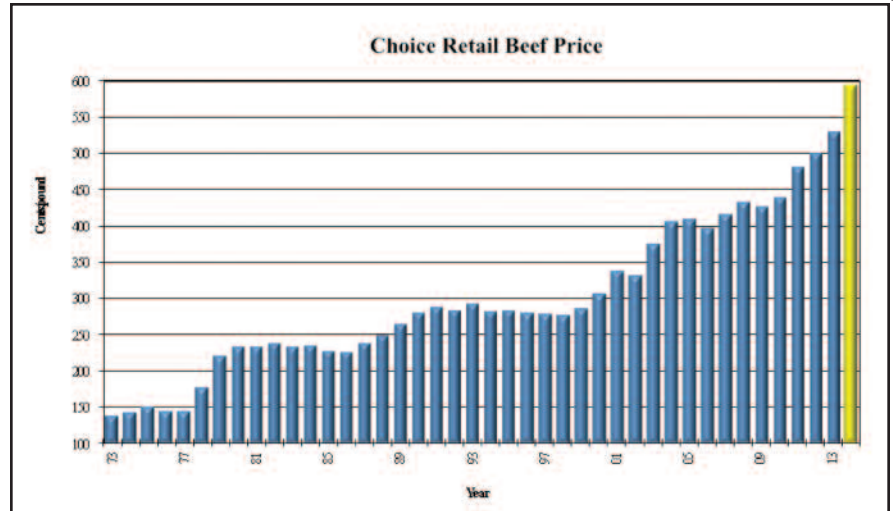
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Hedging for the roller coaster ride

To say the least, it's been a roller coaster ride for the last two months and this is a prime example of why we tend to advise producers to hedge using options. The increased volatility at higher prices is causing even hedgers to question the market's sense of things. We would like to suggest that the supply-driven bull market will continue but we can't because, in reality, no one knows for sure. The best we can hope for is an educated guess. Hope for the best and prepare for the worse, as they say.

The January Supply and Demand report from the USDA continues to indicate that cattle prices should remain at high levels in the first quarter. Their projection for average first quarter price lies between 162 and 168. Last month the projection was 162 to 170 so they trimmed the high side by 2 dollars. For comparison, the fourth quarter average was 165.60. That doesn't look to bearish. What impresses me the most is the Quarterly Beef Production chart.

First quarter beef production is



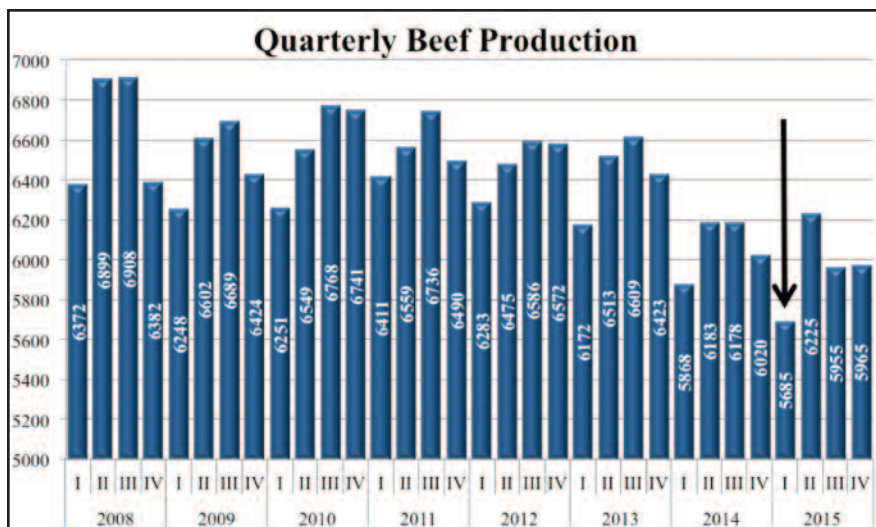
projected to be the lowest since 2008 and over 400 million pounds less than the fourth quarter. Should we expect lower prices? The futures market seems to think so (for now). Another chart that impresses me is Choice retail price

As of November, Choice retail price is up over 12 per cent from last year. What I find so interesting is that retail price doesn't seem to drop much after it increases. With all the gyrations in the live market, you would think retail price would

follow along more closely but it doesn't. Retailers don't like to confuse the consumer with see saw prices. It seems to me that, going forward, there will be plenty of money to continue paying producers their share of retail price.

The top in the cash cattle market may have been posted but it would surprise me if it isn't at least challenged sometime in the first quarter. The cattle market needs higher production to meet demand and although imports have increased some, it isn't enough to offset demand. Until production increases to the point of satisfying demand, cattle price will most certainly be supported.

We continue to suggest hedging all cattle using put options on rallies in the futures market. There is simply too much money at risk to not have some downside protection in place. Grain call options are advised on dips. Even though the market seems inflated, all it takes is a problem in growing conditions either in the US or China to cause grain prices to increase.

FL


Mineral Matters

BY MARK LANDEFELD
OHIO STATE EXTENSION EDUCATOR

Measuring the consequences of mineral deficiencies in cow-calf operations can be difficult. Weight gains, which are off a few pounds usually go unnoticed, reduced milk production can't really be measured in beef cows, and the cow that is limping must have stepped on something causing her sore foot. Reproduction losses may not readily be noticed either because most all the cows had a calf, even though some were a month and a half or two months later than expected. Any of these sound familiar? Lack of sufficient mineral(s) may be the problem.

Think about this. If you have one open cow, or animals not calving on expected calving dates, due to insufficient minerals in the feed, you could have easily paid for many bags of minerals with the loss you have incurred. One calf not born; (\$1000-\$1500 lost, plus feeding momma all year), one calf twenty-one days late; (a calf gaining two lbs./day would be 42 pounds x \$2.00 per pound = \$84 lost) per missed heat cycle.

Mineral supplementation should not be done haphazardly though in cow-calf operations. Producers need to monitor mineral consumption regularly to be sure cows are consuming proper amounts. Directions on each product's bag should indicate how much each animal should consume in a given amount of time.

It is much easier and more cost effective to proactively manage cattle to prevent mineral deficiencies than trying to pinpoint production problems caused by deficits. Adequate minerals and nutrition should not be overlooked. You are paying for it one way or the other! Proper minerals and nutrition just makes "cents," actually dollars, and several of them for the understanding producer.

FL



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YOUR 2015 MINDSET

The transition between calendar years tends to enhance the focus on our performance over the past year and our goals for the coming year. Nearly everyone experiences this tendency, but I think it is stronger in those in agriculture. The changing of the seasons, the completion of one crop and the planning for another, as well as the closing of

the year's finances all heighten our optimism for the year to come.

Optimism is a great starting point, but without a plan the desire for improvement is no better than a dream that is gone minutes after we wake. A written plan requires vision, planning, goals, timetables and action steps that can be followed throughout the year.

Rather than provide a list of strategies, here are a few questions that should be addressed as a part of your prioritizing for the next year:

What problems have you been working on for the last few years—but your progress is disappointing?

Albert Einstein is known for having a great understanding of how the universe works, but he

BY DON TYLER



also understood human nature. One of his more famous quotes is, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again....Expecting different results!" If you have a production, management, family or personnel issue that you have been struggling with for years, it's time to address it seriously and quit hoping that it will get better on its own.

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Are you taking enough initiative in your business to adapt new strategies and technology?

One of my clients tells me often that he realized early in his career that the successful people he knew had a philosophy that he needed to adopt. His philosophy, "What am I willing to do that others are not?"

He said that he was willing to

work harder, learn new skills, take on challenges and delay gratification early in his life so that he could ensure a more stable future for him and his family. He ran older equipment and learned how to fix it. Using paint, welding rods, acetylene—and a strong work ethic—he pulled together used storage and handling equipment, fixed it up, and developed a very efficient system for handling feed and other inputs. This producer is also unafraid to try new technology and management strategies—so long as it will pay for itself in a short period of time.

Do you know when one of your people—or any other resource—has reached its potential?

It seems that one of the toughest decisions a business has to make is when one of their employees has reached their potential and is actually holding back that department, or perhaps even the entire business. This is especially true in family operations. The speed that technology advances has forced us to evaluate our ability to adopt those new resources. Unfortunately, the weak link is often a person whose skillset is no longer up to the needs of the position. It's tough, but we cannot allow one person's limitations to inhibit the progress of the entire operation.

Develop a plan for transitioning this person to something more suitable to their skills.

What are you doing for your industry?

The Dalai Lama is quoted as saying, "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito." Have a plan for ensuring that your industry is viable for future generations of ambitious individuals with a passion for agriculture.

What is your greatest frustration?

I often ask my clients, "What causes you to lose sleep?" or "When you wake up in the middle of the night, what is the first problem that comes to mind that you need to solve?" The answer to this question can reveal a current situation that you need to put more focus on, or a long-term issue that requires a thorough strategy to resolve.

Perhaps you've had a string of challenges. Keep in mind a quote that is attributed to Winston Churchill.... "Success consists of going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm." **FL**

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

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Pre-Calving Vaccination Programs for Cows

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS



The best protection against disease in newborn calves is making sure they get an adequate amount of good-quality colostrum soon after birth, containing antibodies against most of the pathogens they may encounter. If the dam has a chance to build a high level of antibodies before calving, she passes this temporary immunity to her calf via colostrum. To prevent calf-hood disease it is crucial to have a clean environment (low level of pathogens for calves to pick up) and well-nourished, healthy cows with strong immunities.

Vaccinating cows ahead of calving can help build peak antibody levels to make sure the cows' colostrum contains the maximum amount of protective antibodies. Dr. Eugene Janzen, University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, says the E. coli vaccines work very well, but they may not be as necessary as they have

been in the past, especially in herds that no longer calve in confined/contaminated areas.

"Viral fractions of pre-calving vaccines, such as the rotavirus and coronaviruses, may not perform as well, and timing is much more critical. If the calves will be at high risk between 2 to 4 weeks of age for those viral infections, you need to make sure there will be enough antibodies in the colostrum to help them at that time," he says. The cow needs peak antibody levels when she calves, to have enough passive immunity for the calf to give him protection that long.

"With those particular viruses, if you boost the cow's immunity, those antibody levels rise fairly quickly and are deposited in the colostrum fairly quickly. But they also wane quickly. If you vaccinate cows in early February and the majority of your calves arrive the end of March or later, the efficacy of that vaccine will be compromised," he says. You'd need to vaccinate the cows closer to when the calves will be at risk, or give the cow a booster closer to that time.

It helps if your calving period is short—with all the cows bred up quickly to calve within a short time frame—rather than a strung out calving season. "If calving is strung out, and especially if it's behind the barn rather than out on clean pasture, we encourage ranchers to vaccinate the late calvers again," explains



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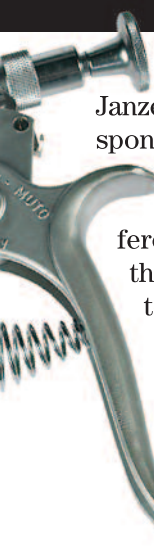
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Janzen. You want peak antibody response at the proper time to help the calves. Different vaccine formulations have different lengths of time in which they are effective, so you need to discuss your calving situation with your veterinarian and select the vaccines that best fit your program.

Some products need a two-shot series the first year, and an annual booster thereafter.

Some vaccines should be given about 3 weeks before the herd starts calving. Some may require a booster for any cows that are calving late—in case immunity is waning before they calve. Make a plan, in consultation with your veterinarian, regarding what product to use and when, depending on when it is feasible to have the cows accessible for vaccinating.

Some cases of diarrhea are due to protozoal infections such as cryptosporidiosis or coccidiosis. “There are no vaccines for these infections. The best prevention is a clean pasture with cattle spread out and not crowded,” he says.


If a calf gets sick, he sheds many times more pathogens than what might be in the cow’s feces. “Sick calves greatly amplify the infectious pressure. As they go through a calf, these organisms proliferate tremendously. The old rule about getting cows spread out on clean ground at calving is still the best advice for preventing disease in young calves,” Janzen says. Prevention depends a lot more on good management and clean calving areas than from a vaccine bottle.

“We do encourage ranchers to vaccinate the cows for Clostridial organisms, especially perfringens, since perfringens may occasionally be to blame for the various enterotoxemias—even though these may be hard to diagnose in the lab. At least this particular vaccine is relatively inexpensive so we just

vaccinate in case it might help,” says Janzen.

“There are many vaccines, with many label claims, and we often make assumptions. The E. coli vaccines work so well that we tend to think that everything else should work in a similar fashion, but it’s not that simple. Some of the diagnoses regarding what is affecting the calves are not definitive. Most




of the time we don’t know with certainty what we are dealing with, and we just play the odds,” he says. Herds with scour problems can often reduce sickness by strategic vaccination of the cow herd, however, particularly if efforts are made to also improve the calving environment and lower the risks for exposure to overwhelming pathogen loads. **FL**



10-G

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Yamaha

Yamaha Motor Corp., U.S.A., today introduced the Wolverine R-Spec, an all-new Side-by-Side (SxS) vehicle that sets a new standard in off-road capability and class-leading comfort. Designed and engineered for exploring extreme terrain, the Wolverine R-Spec is assembled in the U.S.A. for world-wide distribution.

The 2016 Yamaha Wolverine R-Spec boasts an all-new, nimble chassis with a compact design, look and feel; a comfortable and

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The Wolverine R-Spec's long-travel suspension with standard KYB piggyback shocks features 9.7 inches of travel in front and 10.6 inches of travel out back—and more suspension customization with high- and low-speed compression damping, rebound damping and spring preload adjustability. **FL**

AgriLabs

AgriLabs is introducing the newly reformulated, USDA-licensed Colostrx®, a colostrum replacer and supplement designed to ensure calves receive valuable immunity and antibodies needed to survive.

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Digi-Star

Digi-Star introduces the WeighLog for wheel, telescopic and skidsteer loaders. This system provides a user-friendly on-board weighing system that can be used for loading, check weighing and simple batching. The WeighLog system can be retrofitted onto most loaders and forklifts as well as other hydraulic lift systems like dump carts. **FL**





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Elance/Novartis

Elanco today announced it has finalized the acquisition of Novartis Animal Health, creating a new global leader in animal health focused on delivering increased value and innovation to the industry.

The acquisition, announced in April, follows Elanco's purchase of Lohmann Animal Health earlier in 2014. Both strategic investments position the company to offer a more diversified product offering and capabilities to help customers sustain and grow their businesses. This includes the flagship brands customers have come to expect from Elanco, but also a comprehensive portfolio of nearly 300 brands encompassing therapeutics, vaccines, parasiticides, antimicrobials, surgical, enzymes, food safety and more. **FL**



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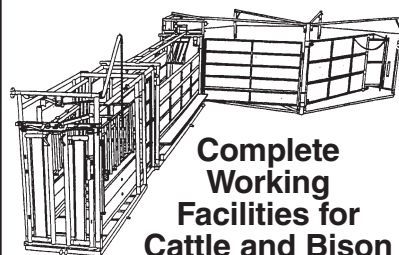
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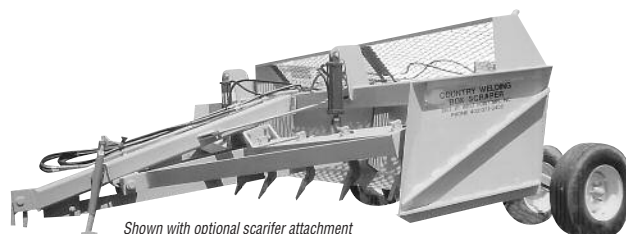


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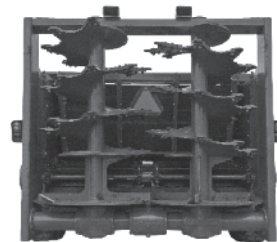
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