



Beef Business

► A look at current issues affecting the cattle industry. Compiled by **Paige Nelson**, field editor

Livestock slaughter: red-meat production down 4% from last year

According to the *Livestock Slaughter* report released by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Agricultural Statistics Board Nov. 20, 2014, commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.32 billion pounds (lb.) in October, down 4% from the 4.51 billion lb. produced in October 2013.

Beef production, at 2.17 billion lb., was 6% below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.64 million head, down 9% from October 2013. The average live weight, at 1,355 lb., was up 28 lb. from the previous year.

Veal production totaled 7.7 million lb., 22% below October a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 43,300 head, down 38% from October 2013. The average live weight was up 59 lb. from last year, at 304 lb.

Pork production totaled 2.13 billion lb., down 2% from the previous year. Hog slaughter totaled 9.95 million head, down 4% from October 2013. The average live weight was up 8 lb. from the previous year, at 286 lb.

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.4 million lb., was up 2% from October 2013. Sheep slaughter totaled 207,700 head, slightly below last year. The average live weight was 129 lb., up 3 lb. from October a year ago.

January to October 2014 commercial red-meat production was 39.5 billion lb., down 4% from 2013. Accumulated beef production was down 6% from last year.

Learn more by viewing the Nov. 21, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily* archive at www.api-virtuallibrary.com/eList-archive/.

Source: USDA-NASS.

More than 200 groups urge Congress to continue supporting COOL

On Dec. 2, 207 groups representing farm, ranch, consumer and manufacturing groups, joined in a letter that urges U.S. Senate leaders to continue supporting the U.S. country-of-origin labeling (COOL) law that is currently under attack by the governments of Canada and Mexico at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The group's letter specifically urges Congress not to weaken, suspend or rescind COOL in the upcoming legislation to provide

funding for the federal government in FY 2015.

The group's letter follows on the heels of a bipartisan letter sent by 32 Senators that likewise urged Senate leaders not to weaken or suspend COOL in the FY 2015 appropriations process.

Canada and Mexico challenged the U.S. COOL law at the WTO, alleging that livestock from their respective countries were being treated less favorably than domestic livestock under the new requirement that muscle cuts of meat be labeled so consumers will know where the animal from which the meat was derived was born, where it was raised and where it was harvested.

In October, the WTO agreed with Canada and Mexico and concluded that some U.S. meatpackers were either opting not to purchase foreign livestock or they were discounting foreign livestock.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) appealed the WTO ruling. A decision on the appeal is not expected until well into 2015.

Source: R-CALF USA.

Cattle on feed in the United States up slightly

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.6 million head on Nov. 1, 2014. The inventory was slightly higher than Nov. 1, 2013 (see accompanying table).

Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.36 million, 1% below 2013. Net placements were 2.26 million head. During October, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 lb. were 690,000; 600-699 lb. were 570,000; 700-799 lb. were 462,000; and 800 lb. and greater were 635,000. For the month of October, placements were the second lowest since the series began in 1996.

Marketings of fed cattle during October totaled 1.69 million, 8% below 2013. October marketings are the lowest since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 97,000 during October 2014, 28% above 2013.

Item	2013	2014	% previous year
	----- 1,000 head -----	----- 1,000 head -----	
On feed Oct. 1	10,110	10,058	99
Placed on feed during Oct.	2,378	2,357	99
Fed cattle marketed during Oct.	1,827	1,685	92
Other disappearance during Oct.	76	97	128
On feed Nov. 1	10,585	10,633	100

Learn more by viewing the Nov. 24, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily* archived at www.api-virtuallibrary.com/eList-archive/.

Source: USDA-NASS.

USDA announces new support to help schools purchase more food from local farmers

Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Dec. 2 more than \$5 million in grants for 82 projects spanning 42 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands that support the USDA efforts to connect school cafeterias with local farmers and ranchers through its Farm to School Program. The program helps schools purchase more food from local farmers and ranchers in their communities, expanding access to healthy local food for school children and supporting local economies. According to USDA's first-ever Farm to School Census released earlier this year, school districts participating in farm-to-school programs purchased and served more than \$385 million in local food in school year 2011-2012, with more than half of participating schools planning to increase their purchases of local food in the future.

Farm to School projects will serve more than 4,800 schools and 2.8 million students, nearly 51% of whom live in rural communities.

USDA's Farm to School grants will also be used to support agriculture and nutrition

education efforts such as school gardens, field trips to local farms and cooking classes. USDA Farm to School Conference and Event Grants support regional, state and national conferences, events and/or trainings that have a specific emphasis on developing supply chain relationships by connecting local producers to school food buyers.

Source: *USDA Office of Communications.*

Texas state beef checkoff program under way

Collections under Texas' new state beef checkoff program began Oct. 1, 2014, after Texas beef producers voted to establish a state-level beef checkoff program, which was approved by a wide margin of 66% of voters. The Texas Department of Agriculture conducted the referendum upon petition by cattle industry organizations under the authorities designated by the Texas Legislature.

The program is funded through a refundable \$1-per-head assessment on cattle at each point of ownership transfer in Texas. The funds are managed in accordance with Texas law by the Beef Promotion Research Council of Texas (BPRCT). The BPRCT consists of 20 Texas cattle producers appointed by the Texas commissioner of agriculture. All state beef checkoff programs are overseen by the BPRCT.

The BPRCT contracts with the Texas Beef Council to conduct demand-building programs in the areas of promotion, research and education.

The fiscal 2015 year began Oct. 1, 2014, for the BPRCT with a budget of \$5.67 million.

Source: *Beef Promotion Research Council of Texas.*

House passes federal lands package

Dec. 4, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 300-119. The NDAA included a lands package that was negotiated by the Senate and House Committees on Energy and Natural Resources during the past few weeks. The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) applaud the House for including the positive provisions of the Grazing Improvement Act.

The provisions passed codify the "grazing rider" and allow for the application of environmental analysis to allotments rather than the permits, which will extend in some cases to multiple-allotment analysis. The language also provides for both grazing-permit decisions and trailing and crossing decisions to be categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Of particular importance is the removal of detrimental language regarding

grazing permit retirement that was included during markup in the Senate process.

Source: *NCBA.*

Livestock producers approve policy to guide KLA

Members of the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) adopted policy addressing their business interests during the group's annual meeting, Dec. 3-5, 2014, in Wichita. Resolutions on the beef checkoff, *Clean Water Act* regulations, the threatened listing of the lesser prairie chicken and trichomoniasis were among those drawing members' attention. The process started in committee and council meetings and concluded with final approval by the general KLA membership.

►An existing resolution on the beef checkoff was amended to support changes in the *1985 Beef Promotion and Research Act* that would authorize an increase in the assessment rate. It goes further to oppose creating a supplemental beef checkoff under the *Commodity Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1996*. Compared to the 1985 act, the 1996 act gives more control over checkoff decisions to the federal government, allows for an increased share of funds to go toward administration and does not ensure a coordinated national/state partnership.

►KLA members retained a resolution opposing legislation that would expand federal jurisdiction of the *Clean Water Act*, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) current proposal to redefine "waters of the United States." The resolution urges EPA and other agencies to recognize the abilities of states to best manage water resources.

►Policy was amended to support the inclusion of grazing lands in the 4(d) Rule for the lesser prairie chicken. The rule currently grants incidental take protection to routine ag practices on land cultivated within five years preceding the listing of the lesser prairie chicken as threatened, but does not afford the same protection to grasslands used in livestock production.

►Another resolution amended by KLA members supports changes to state law or regulations requiring timely notification of the owners of neighboring herds by Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health officials when a confirmed case of trichomoniasis is discovered.

►The membership voted to retain policy supporting regulatory and/or statutory changes to the current COOL program that would bring the United States into compliance with international trade obligations and avoid trade disruptions or retaliatory action.

►Another retained resolution encourages EPA to resist proposals that lower the air-quality standards for ozone levels and recognize air-quality problems caused by prescribed burning are a rare event for which cities should not be penalized for nonattainment of clean air guidelines.

Learn more, including additional policy resolutions, by viewing the Dec. 9, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily* archived at www.api-virtuallibrary.com/eList-archive/Angus-Elist/.

Source: *KLA.*

